

LETTERS

From several PARTS of

EUROPE,

AND THE

EAST.

Written in the YEARS 1750, &c.

In these are contained,

The WRITER's OBSERVATIONS on
the Productions of NATURE, the Monuments
of ART, and the Manners of the INHABITANTS,

In TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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M DCC LIII.

LETTERS

MONTREAL PAPERS

ADVERTISMENT MURKIN'S

ANTIQUE

EDITIONS

T. S.

THE following who were
engaged in the preparation of
the original edition of the
British Museum Catalogue
of the Library of the
late Dr. John Murray,
and the late Dr. John
Gough, will be pleased to
see their names inserted
in the new edition, which
will be published in
the month of October.
This is the occasion of the
return of the Library to
Montreal, after a long
absence.



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ADVERTISEMENT
OF THE
EDITORS.

THE gentleman who wrote these letters, is at this time abroad, and it is without his design that they are published. He had acquired such a love for the curiosities of other countries, that he made but a very short stay in his own; and during that time, these letters were not, that we know of, mentioned to him.

They were written to a person of some judgment, who esteemed them very valuable; and on their being lately shewn, on a particular occasion, to one of the greatest masters of the subjects they treat upon, it was his opinion, that they were wor-

thy of the regard of the public. He says, they are full of remarks and observations, many of them entirely new, and all proper. More it becomes not one to say, who is so much concerned in the credit they may do their writer.

It was on this advice that they were published. We have taken out all that was particular, so that the whole cannot be understood as a compleat correspondence : but we have endeavoured, as far as might be, to make up the connections, and prevent any abrupt or incoherent passages.

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LET-



LETTERS.

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LETTER I.

JPromised to write to you, my dear *** * from every place where I made a stay, if it were but a short one. An accident not worth troubling you about has detained me some hours at Calais. You would have frowned, perhaps, if this had not been the case, had no letter given you notice of my arrival on the Continent. I am not the first correspondent who has sat down to write when he had nothing to say; but this is so much the case at present, that if places, the names of which we are so well acquainted with, afford no more matter of worthy curiosity than I find here, the necessity of forfeiting my word with you will not be the only occasion I shall have of repenting my expedition.

The shape of a town, and the number of its entrenchments, its distance from the next, or
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its accommodations for the busy spirits who share with me this itch of wandering, may be the sources of others' observations. I travel, you well know, with a different intent. Countries the most fertile in these, for the general visitant, may be to me barren ; but I am not without hopes of finding my return, in the meeting a thousand subjects for my attention, in places where those who have professedly studied what to talk about, have been silent. If I despise the accomplishments of the modern travelled gentlemen, I am not without that spirit which gives a due reverence for the subjects they affect to pursue. Though I hold in great contempt the things they know ; there are, among those of which they affect to speak, many that have charms for me, more than their very imaginations can pretend they have for them : the *Virtù* (abject as the ideas annexed to it, in the minds of those who have it most frequent in their mouths, have rendered the word) is the name, such as it is, of a study worthy the warmest assiduity, and it will have mine. Despise me if I pass over a statue, a picture, a building, or but a coin that deserves attention ; and that has not already been hackneyed through the hands of every writer on the subject ; without giving you, if not such an account of its proportion, colouring, orders, and antiquity, as the mere sculptor, the mere painter, the mere architect, or the mere medallist would ; yet such a one at least as conveys to you all the pleasure which the object gave me. A mere any thing, it has been said with reason, is a mere as. The beauties which it requires the knowledge of a science to discover, do no great honour to the author of them. You know the time I have devoted to the polite arts, you know the attention with which I have

I have studied them, you know, none knows so well as you, the advantages I have made of that application. I do not rank my progress in the place in which your partiality has been pleased to set it. You will best see from the light in which things strike me, what it is, and you are to remember, that it was always, and it always shall continue so, my turn rather to wish myself in some degree instructed in different things, than a mere master of any : and if you allow me some merit in the several sciences, the improvement in which is the true end of travelling, I shall be more satisfied with the acknowledgment, than with the most exalted praise for excellence in any one. People in general, who make the tour, put me in mind of boys who have been told that they should catch larks if the sky fell, and spend the time that would have stretched the nets, or limed the twigs, in waiting for the event : they expect not to improve, but to find knowledge in their way ; they expect to hear statues speak, and to be informed, not by the colouring or the design ; not by the structure or the harmony of the piece ; but from some immediate articulation from the canvas, who was the master, and in what his excellence. The one as well as the other will succeed when the events happen ; in the mean time I am afraid the mind of the traveller will be as empty as the stomach of the bird-catcher, if there be no food but what is to be obtained by miracle.

To the rudiments of the sciences, the examples give at once force and elucidation. They at once confirm and explain what has before been impressed ; but I know not how he should enter into the spirit of a writer, who has no means of communication with him but his eyes, and who

attempts the acquaintance before he knows the form of the letters. I look upon the lectures I have received from you, and the lessons I have had from the authors you have recommended to me, as a foundation on which I shall be able to build a superstructure that will do me great pleasure.

I flatter my mind with the expectation of examples to all the rules I have imbibed, in the works of antiquity, and the more eminent of later date; from which both you and your favourite authors have enforced their precepts, Shall I be disappointed? These will be the objects of my search, and of my examination: and not only these. Whatever I shall find commanding my attention, I shall suppose not unworthy yours, and when I err in this, you will continue your good offices in telling me that I do so.

Well! how easy is it for a man to cover his paper, who has nothing to say upon it! That was, I think, the confession with which I set out in this lengthened epistle! Let me review it. If it is not a letter, you must allow it a preface to a letter; if it cannot have the name of one of the promised series, you must give it that of a premonitory advertisement. If it is not a part of the entertainment, it is your bill of fare, and may sharpen your appetite to what it promises, if the dishes are to your palate.

Though I thought I had done, I shall only conclude with my paper. M——s is at my elbow, and he fancies himself of importance enough to deserve a place in the preliminary. I am his pupil, you know, in his favourite study, as I have

I have been yours in the beaux arts; and though the science appeared dry at first, I begin to look into it now with as much pleasure as attention. M——s declares; in his province, as warmly as I in mine, against the hackneyed and trite themes of observation, but nature is full of wonders, and we own the barrenness of art. There is nothing but may afford matter of instructive speculation: he promises me, in the abundance of these, an endless theme for my attention; and commands me to add, that he will be so sure a resource at a dead lift, that if ever I miss my opportunity of writing, you may be assured it is not from barrenness of matter, but absolute idleness. But the chaise is in order. Whence you will next hear from me, you are much better able to guess than

* * *

LETTER II.

I Write to you from Gesoriacum. Where, in the name of wonder, methinks I hear you say, is that unheard-of city. Boulogne, my dear ****, Frenchmen call it, but this was palpably its name among the deified of antiquity: it may not be so well to continue the name which the Roman Alexander gave it. They make it the Iccius Portus of this errant heroë; but the sea is running apace away from it; and, instead of the fifty-oared gallies that once intimidated the simple inhabitants of those buildings, that stretched along the banks, where now the merchants of many nations live in security; pro-

bably in another age a Gravesend boat will be stranded at the mole.

It is a sight that never fails to affect me in the strongest manner, when I review the monuments of different nations on the same spot : when I trace on the same dirt the footsteps of the barbarous, and the more civilized conquerors, and recollect, amidst the present tranquillity, the blood of distant countries, that has been spilt where it is not remembred.

That angular tower, chaunts forth my guide, in the universal recitative of those who shew curiosities, from the demonstrator at the Vatican, to the humble verger at the abbey ; that tower was erected by the famous Julius Cæsar ; those walls, and that decaying rampart were the works of British hands, when those islanders invaded the Continent. Whether that Julius Cæsar was not also an Englishman, was a question too abstruse for my attendant. I dismissed him ; and while my eye was drawn alternately to the remains of ancient Romish, and less ancient British victories, could not but brand with infamy, in my own mind, the pompous names of conquest and enlarged dominion. That he, who might at his own door cultivate the little field his father's industry procured him ; that he, who might supply his own necessities by helping the deficiencies and wants of others ; that he, who, in a country blessed with warm suns, and gentle showers, and with a greater good, with liberty, might eat the bread of peace, and see his rising offspring play about the door which they once should inherit ; should leave the fond wife, and the prattling infant, the ease and innocence of such

such a situation, to murder those who had not offended him or his ; to cut the throats of men who possessed that which he could not want, merely because they possessed it. Distracted and unnatural ! But that at one man's beck ten thousand creatures, equal to himself in form and mind ; equal, perhaps superior, in virtue and in understanding, should be sent forth on such an errand, not prompted even by the promised possession of the unworthy spot ; that widows and that orphans should lament the blood spilt on the earth, not worth the accepting ; and this because one whom themselves had raised to guard and to defend them, chose it should be so : most monstrous !

It is thus my free thoughts have always looked on kings, the brambles raised to eminence, to tear and burn the forest. In what other light are we to see that mirror of English authority, our eighth Harry, purchasing this acquisition at the expence of more than six thousand lives, and selling the bawble when he was tired of playing with it, for a sum for which a modern merchant would not think it worth while to give up the fatigues of business ?

LETTER III:

I Am out of humour with my expedition. Be candid, tell me will the entertainment, but that is little, will the instruction be greater as I proceed. Indeed, what I have yet met with by no means answers the florid stories I have been told, the pompous things I have read, where France was made an earthly paradise. I am at Amiens. I have passed a desert, not a fruitful country. The French are French in all things. The same spirit which leads the beau to cover a ragged shirt with a laced coat, and equips the coatless centinel with paper ruffles, plants, encloses, shall I say cultivates, no, it will imply too much, those spots of ground that are about their road ; but when the eye is carried farther, when it takes in more than every eye must that passes but in the galloping post chaise ; what does it meet ? a desert : the sands of another Afric. I have passed through Montrueil, Abbeville, Pecquigny, names that have founded in my ears ; but, believe me, English towns of less noisy character afford more matter of observation.

My eye is tired with the yellow country. I long for the green carpet of an English meadow, the gay enamel of some rising hill, the hanging verdure of some fidelong forest. The fortifications of the first of these towns strikes me with hate and terror : happy, happy Britain, that needs no walls, no ramparts ! I never see them without the ideas of war and slavery, of butchery and meanness. The second has its castle too. Here the indigent and proud inhabitants boast of a manufacture for cloth :

cloth : it is not so considerable as that in many a Yorkshire village. Pecquigny vaunts, in its best neighbourhood, what we lament in the worst of ours ; the turf of Crowland only choaks those who can have no better firing, that of Pecquigny poisons.

But I am at Amiens, a capital of Provence, and one of the richest and most considerable cities of this part of the kingdom : you would laugh to see the inhabitants of this place valuing themselves above the class who live in lesser towns. I was convinced by many of the middling sort, that, excepting Paris, there could not be a greater place than this. Heaven and earth ! what must a Frenchman say, who should see our Bristol, or our Birmingham, our Norwich, or our Liverpool. Don't call me Englishman, with a laugh, on the partiality to my country ; these Frenchmen make all pride of that sort modesty.

But who has been at Amiens, and has not seen the head of St. John Baptist ? Every man who has been at Amiens has seen it. The sacred relique is preserved with a strange solemnity, and religious reverence in the cathedral : here the immortalized de Sarton brought it five hundred years since from Constantinople. But what say the Turks ? *Christians have faith and money.* I must not omit to own the church a fine one. There are some sculptures in honour of the virgin Mary, to whom the edifice is dedicated, that do honour to the hand that finished them : they affect to call the paintings fine ones too ; they are pompous, and there are among them some ; or shall I give you my free sense of the matter ? I always will ; there are parts of some which I think do deserve

deserve that character : but much of the rest, as well as of the sculpture, looks very insignificant to me, who have been made to expect such greater things ; who did not come prepared to stare at every thing, because every thing must be new : to me who had prepared for a rational admiration of the paintings of this happier part of the world, in that respect, by seeing Wilton, and by studying Houghton. It must be more than I yet see that gratifies my curiosity, or answers in any degree my expectation.

Though I hold the ornaments of the cathedral of Amiens, however, in less estimation than many of the travellers, who think their time is not, or, which is the same thing to them, will not appear mispent, if they can give accounts that shall astonish others of things which did not astonish themselves ; I am to confess to you, that I think greatly of the structure. Perhaps I compensate, indeed, by the more eminent regard I pay to the building for the want of respect to what it contains : you will say also that I am not a prejudiced Englishman, when you see me discountenancing the fables which give a British architect the honour of having raised it. I think it by much the finest Gothic pile I have seen. A Frenchman, Luzzarche, indisputably began, and two Frenchmen, brothers, the Cormauts, finished it.

It is not difficult to see how the opinion of our countrymen's having raised it was set on foot, or how it has been continued. The bas-reliefs over the portal, indisputably have for their subject stories in the life of our Edward the confessor. A modern traveller is not to be expected to look farther, and the conclusion is easy. But he who will

will look farther, will see that these bas-reliefs are not of the same date with the building. They are evidently of much later origin; and, to confess the truth, though they have been the work undoubtedly of English hands; and though they do not want their share of merit, they are not equal to the rest.

Our countrymen, you know, were long masters of this part of the French dominions. It was in this very church that our third Edward performed the ceremony of public homage to Philip of Calais for his hereditary dominions in France; an act not voluntary, but productive of the most fatal consequences. It is not only this bas-relief that the British workmen have added to the building, the rest may be discovered by a judicious eye, and though executed with an unwearied accuracy, they are not the things that most strike the admiring traveller.

The candour of my decisions on this head so greatly pleased some Frenchmen, who did me the honour of their company, that they were at some pains to set me right; so I firmly believe they esteemed it, in regard to the precious relique, which I had slighted; but which these bigots prefer to the whole structure, and all its real ornaments. They talked much of the effects that had been wrought by it; they spoke with an holy vehemence against the assertions of the nuns of St. Claire, at Rome, and they referred me to the pious and learned Du Cange, who has written a treatise to prove, that this is the true and real head of the martyr, against their pretended attestations. I have obeyed their solicitations. I have looked into both the arguments.

It were too much to say I have read them, but I have seen enough: we have a coarse phrase that expresses certain disputes, by means of which, people who could not have obtained them any way else, often get their goods again. It was thus with me in this religious contest; the argument between the angry parties, is, whether the head at Amiens, or that at Rome be the true head of John the Baptist; since, as no history mentions that martyr having two, one must be false. The purpose which is answered to the impartial reader, is, to know both are spurious. A great writer of our nation banterers the Mussulman who spends his life in examining the disputes that have arisen between the followers of OMAR, and of ALI, while he observes, that without all that learning and application, he might have discovered that Mahomet was an impostor, and the koran a heap of rubbish. I wish the sarcasm would be confined where that instance rests it. Our religion, or take the matter in a larger view, Christianity, is built on too firm, too good a foundation to be affected by it; but assuredly all the disputes about the bushels of this saint's teeth, and the chips of that martyr's coffin, might have been obviated on the same plan, as easily as that of the John Baptist's head at Amiens.

There is another score on which I reverence Amiens, though I hold it very cheap on account of those for which it has been honoured; its antiquity. Where Amiens now stands, exactly stood the capital of the Ambiani of the Roman historians. Cæsar and Ptolemy concur in placing the Amiens of their time in the Belgic Gaul; and here was one of the great manufactures of those arms which conquered the world. Now what are the remains!

remains ! To me it is a pleasure to traverse the fields, where I can be assured the long since mouldered foot of Cæsar stamped ; but I am almost single in my affection for these remembrances. I have tired myself : when I think on what I have written, I wish I have not tired you too. Blame me not if my letter be a far-rago. Amiens is so. If I had thought it would have been so long, I would, as a great author says, have taken time to have made it shorter.

LETTER IV.

DIONYSIUS the Areopagite, the apostle of the Gauls, so he is called, though you and I perhaps think we see proof that he never could have set his foot in the kingdom, has given name to a little town where I am obliged to stop ; and whence to write to you any thing worthy your regard, I had despaired as I approached it. We are not always to be determined by appearances. I have found so much matter of admiration, that I begin to have a better opinion of my expedition. To confess a truth to you, I have been hitherto much inclined to imagine myself a kind of Quixote, set out in pursuit of adventures, and treading in the steps of those who not having found giants in their way, were reduced to copy that good knight's manner, and convert wind-mills into them. But I think better of it. I see a vast deal here, and when one is in a good humour, things put on a face of beauty, which we passed before as not worth regard. I can now recollect, that in passing Chantilly, I saw a noble palace, or shall I rather

rather call it a castle, the seat of the Condé family. The gardens are large and elegant, the water-works magnificent. There is in the great terrace an equestrian statue of the constable Anne de Montmorenci ; but it is not a finished one. I can recollect, that the general decay of a castle at Ecoven, the work of hands perished twenty ages since, affected me with awe as I went by them. I do not know that I should have recollect^d these, if greater objects had not given me opportunity of writing what I know must please, must more than entertain you ; it has instructed me.

I spoke with some degree of rapture of the cathedral at Amiens. I am to tell you it is not the only Gothic edifice which this part of France has to boast. The abbey church at St. Dennis is at once a noble and a pleasing spectacle, an honour to that rude taste. 'Tis large and highly finished. 'Tis at once strong and light. There may be more of labour in some of the others, but I do not expect to meet in any with so much delicacy. The sixty pillars which support it, command great approbation. The gates, the columns of the great altar, and some other of the ornaments are copper ; the work laboured and executed well, according to the taste. The treasures within are immense, and the curiosities, to a man of my turn, worthy still more regard. Over the door of the choir is placed a cross, a large one, of massy gold, enriched with diamonds and other gems ; there are some bas-reliefs of gold upon the great altar ; and diamonds decorate this as well as another cross of six foot in height, placed over the table. Should you be charmed with this ? There are many who are so ; but it was not
the

the case with me. Things may be rich without being elegant. If intrinsic value might pass indeed for elegance, or for matter of curiosity, St. Dennis would have a claim to both which no place I have yet seen could dispute with it. What I have named is nothing. There are six cabinets crowded with the treasures of the place. The regalia of France are of the number. The crown of Charlemain, gold and enriched with diamonds, is there. The French kings wear this on the day of their coronation. His sceptre, his sword, and his spurs are enriched in the same manner, and a volume kept here, containing the epistles and gospels, is loaded also rather than decorated on the covers with gems.

You will laugh to hear me name among the rest of these invaluable treasures, relics of saints, king Charlemain's ivory chessmen, Rowland his nephew's hunting horn, and the sword of Joan of Arc : I wept to read upon the blade of another weapon of destruction, preserved there, the name of Talbot. It was found near Castillon, on the very spot where that illustrious Briton is said to have fallen.

But the treasures are not confined to these. I saw among the medals some that are wanted in the first cabinets of England and of Italy. I had smiled at the gilt copper chair, preserved on the top of one of the cabinets, and pointed to as the throne of the great Dagobert ; but had you been with me, there would have been other passions raised on the sight of the Ganymede in the claws of the eagle, which decorates the top of his staff. The work is excellent, the attitudes of both surprisingly just and expressive. A banchal

chanal in bas-relief, gives tenfold value to a cup, a fine one too, of solid agate; and about the neck of their St. Benedict, hangs a cameo with the head of Proteus. You would admire, you would be ravished at these; but these are baubles to one jewel more; most things that I have seen, are indeed baubles to it. 'Tis an intaglia. Heaven! how is it possible the ancients could have arrived at such an exquisite perfection. Had they instruments unknown to us for the cutting them? Perhaps they might, but who gave them hands and eyes to execute what we have hardly organs to admire? We are told the invention of glasses for magnifying objects is of late date. How is it? by what inexplicable magic have they been able without glasses to work what we cannot see without the assistance of those enlarging instruments? But I run from my subject. The figure is a Julia, the daughter of Titus, the mistress of Domitian; the stone is a beryll, a fine one: 'tis an oval an inch and a half long, and without a flaw: it is set transparent, and even, without the engraving, would be no common curiosity. The head dress has something strangely romantic, and to a merely modern eye ridiculous in it. It rises to a strange height before in little buckles. This is the Corymbium of Petronius, and distances all the tete-de-muttons of modern origin by many stages. 'Tis singular in this gem, that the name of the man who cut it is preserved, and though evidently one of the first and greatest of those incomparable artists we meet with, is nowhere else. The name is Euhadus: we know it not otherwise than on this gem, and on a monument preserved in the Franciscan gardens, or that the person is declared to have been Libertus Augusti. The sight of it on this gem, called into

into my mind the having read of it on that monument; most probably both are of the same person. The cloyster has been the repository of the French monarchs from very early ages. They have all tombs, and in some of them there has not been any want of expence; but the best of them are poor in workmanship. That of Lewis the twelfth makes the greatest figure, and is esteemed, I hear, a first rate piece of modern statuary. 'Tis of white marble, large, but to me not magnificent; laboured, but not elegant. The bas-reliefs represent his victories. Poncia of Florence was the sculptor, and he has obtained, if he has not deserved great honour by it. The many are captivated with shew. More have been struck at Westminster with that rude pile of marble raised to one of the Newcastles, than with the finest monuments of art in that place, the inferior of which, hot to exaggerate in favour of my own country, are greatly preferable to the best here.

After this of Lewis the twelfth, the principal regard is paid to those of Charles the eighth, Francis the first, and Henry the second. There is an attempt at the Italian manner in all these, but it is servile, and only makes them contemptible, by the comparison, the objects of which it raises.

Among these multitudes of crowned heads, 'tis singular, that there are deposited two persons of inferior dignity; these are the famed Guesclin, and the perhaps more worthily famed Turenne. We know the marshal rose to an eminence that merited the distinction; we are certain of his having done actions to which no honours could be equal. As to the legends of the earlier heroes,

they are probably in a great measure fabulous. It is not that I am partial against the arm that drove the English out of Normandy : there is an appearance of romance in all that is recorded of him. Authors who intend to be believed, should not advance too much. Turenne is deposited as a heroe should be. The monument stands in a chapel built on purpose ; the effigies of the marshal is disposed at full length, and decorated with trophies, and every ensign of triumph in relieveo.

I was affected with I know not what of reverence, when I looked upon the statue of the great Dagobert. It stands on the left of the entrance to the abbey. He is represented siting in an imperial mantle, fastened after the Roman manner on the right shoulder. There is a look of dignity ; perhaps the reverence is encreased by age, but certain it is, that I have never been more affected with the best statues of the ancients, than with the air of this, in spite of all the difference in the workmanship.

Shall I be merry after all this praise ? There is a subject from which it is not easy to refrain. On the mausoleum in the choir is a bas-relief, a representation of a vision ; Dagobert hurried by devils, so the legend explains it ; it were very possible otherwise to be at a loss for the story, in a boat toward the Vulcanian islands, the Æolian isles, he is invoking the three saints, Martin, Maurice, and Dennis, and they are hurrying to his relief. The story is worthy the workmanship, the workmanship the story. It is a most miserable business. It seems to have been done some time in the thirteenth century.

It

It was in this church, they tell me, that Henry the fourth abjured the doctrine of Calvin, in the hands of the archbishop of Bourges. It is pity such an incident should not also be recorded.

LETTER V.

I AM disputing with myself whether this capital of France will answer the ideas which those who have talked and written of it have raised in me. I have been but a few hours in Paris. I was eager to be among its curiosities, and I have, I scarce know how, fallen upon one which has filled me with great satisfaction, though I do not remember to have heard it named. I had got into the St. Germain's quarter, and the person who attended me was pointing to the Hôtel de Cluni, a place belonging to the order of Clunian monks, and built about the time of Lewis the twelfth. It stands in the Rue de la Harpe. My eye was taken from the object to which he would have directed it by the remains of a venerable edifice. I never see these things without a thousand mix'd considerations. I had expected no remain of this kind here: I enquired of my attendant what it was, and I was answered coolly, that it was an old building, the Palais de Thermes. Farther he could not inform me, and his looks declared that he took me to be a strange wrong-headed creature, to think it worth my notice.

I was amazed to find in a place so famous for its attachment to the politer studies, so noble a piece of antiquity so scandalously neglected, so entirely disregarded. I entered a vast hall, the single room now standing of what was indisputably once, to measure the giant by his foot, a most magnificent and most grand edifice. The room is lofty, as well as spacious, and strikes one with that sort of respectful admiration which it is natural to feel on entering some Gothic temple : the workmanship of this, however, is of another taste. Instead of that profusion of ill-placed ornaments, which we see in all those buildings, the plain simplicity of this speaks it Roman. The walls are massy, very high and full of niches : the roof is very lofty, and has a noble and august simplicity ; it is an arch form in the Roman style of building : it makes a portion of a perfect circle, and though of a great diameter, has no pillar or any thing to support it, but the walls of the room. One almost dreads its falling in as the eye is carried up to it ; but it has stood as it is for many ages, and even bears the additional and unexpected weight of a vast dead load of earth, with which the monks of the neighbouring hotel have formed a kind of pensile garden : and it does not seem in any danger from it. The walls are partly of brick, partly of a peculiar hard plaster. The brick is truly Roman in dimension, as well as colour and consistence. The plaster is much harder, it is much like that we at present see in some parts of Italy, made from the powder of Puzzolo, the Pulvis puteolanus of the ancients. They used this composition to run mounds into the sea ; and we have the art of making it durable and hard as marble.

It

It is not difficult to find the time in which this building was erected. Paris is indeed a city easily traced by authentic records, from its little origin, to the present magnificence; and as the dates of all its edifices may be thus ascertained, that of this neglected antique one will be found. Paris has existed from the earliest times of which we have account; but before its reduction by the Romans, and indeed of some time after it, was no great place. In the Celtic times we do not find that it enjoyed any prerogative, more than the other towns of Gaul, which were the capitals of their respective provinces. Cæsar tells, us in his commentaries, that after the defeat of Cavus-togenes, he removed to this little city the assembly of the states general of the whole circuit, from Chartres, where they had been used to meet. This seems to have been the first step toward the aggrandizing the at present great and magnificent Paris. Cæsar confined his partiality to it; but those who followed him in the rule of the country, some time after, paid it less respect. The residence of the prætors, and consequently the resort of the great having been, not in the Gallia Comata, in the Celtic division, of which part stood Paris; but in the Brauata, or Narbonensis; so their own histories inform us. We know of their being at Lyons, and at Vienne, but there passed a very considerable time, in which they seem not to have given that preference to Paris which it held in the favour of this Emperor.

Though Paris was for a time less regarded, we find afterwards, it recovered all its reputation. Julian, not yet honoured with the title of apostate, Ju-

lian, while viceroy of Gaul, under Constantius, grew fond of it. We find him, in his own writings, calling it his dear and his beloved Lutetia : he speaks of it with vast encomiums in many places, and evidently resided almost entirely there ; he built a palace, this Palatum Thermarum there, not only his own residence, but that of many of the monarchs of the Merovingian race.

The remains of the Palais de Thermes are but small ; you have already heard all that there stands of them ; but from this indisputable authority, it is easy to know of how august a building they were once a-part. At a time when antiquities were more regarded than they are at present, the people who considered them, have formed a great variety of conjectures as to the use to which this remaining fragment of Julian's edifice was intended. Many, the generality I am since told, of those who have considered it, have supposed it a temple, and imagined the niches in the walls intended for altars ; to me it appears by the whole structure, rather to have been a bathing room. You well know how fond the Romans were of these, and not to mention that the ancient name Palatum Thermarum bespeaks something of that kind, in a manner not easily to be got over, I have been at the pains to trace the vestiges, obscure ones as they are, of some other buildings, evidently of the same period, which confirm it to me beyond dispute. I have followed from it to the spring of Arcueil, a distance not less than three leagues, the remains of certain arcades, by which, when entire, there was doubtless a communication. These are of the same work and same materials with the hall that is now remaining of the palace, and were evidently

evidently the work of the same period. What was it the Romans spared either for their convenience or delight? How has their magnificence in these early times, astonished all that have lived since? How many monuments of their conquests, and of their greatness, has even their extravagance and ostentation left throughout that world which they conquered? When I consider from what that people rose, how long they continued in their power and glory, and to what they are now fallen, what is there too much for the imagination, to suppose of other states? Which is the principality so little, that may not at some time, from the ambition of some turbulent ruler, demand and make the conquest of the world?

LETTER

LETTER VI.

I Had occasion to mention the ancient state of Paris, and its first approaches to that greatness which now has led its inhabitants to consider it as the first city in the world: shall I continue the enquiry, and follow it through some more periods? We have little information of its farther improvements, till at a very considerable distance of time. Clovis the Great extended and enriched it considerably; he built a palace on the south-west side of the river, adjoining to his new founded monastery of St. Genevieve: but Julian's palace was long after this the residence of his successors. Childibert, who succeeded his father Clovis in this part of his dominions, built, on the same side the water, the abbey of St. Germains, on the ruins of a temple dedicated to Isis. The works of these hands were not of a contrivance equal to their merit, or at all proportioned to the spirit of those who raised them. France soon after became a scene of war and slaughter. The Normans pushed the success of their invasions in the ninth century; and it was not difficult for them to drive the French monarchs out of these less fortified habitations. The same arms that forced them back into the city, levelled the structures which they abandoned; they spared none but those which they were able to turn against the just proprietors: and even these which covered and supported their attacks upon the city, they spoiled of all ornament, and left only what they only used, the walls.

It

It is an advantage to have been unfortunate : you who are familiar with the story of these times, need not be put in mind, that the invaders had numbers, discipline, and the greatest of all sources of brutal courage, necessity : the wolf must starve if he broke not his way into the fold. The French were ill provided of soldiery ; and what they had, were ill disciplined ; accustomed to luxury, they fainted under the fatigues of war. What saved them, but that they had been conquered : the situation of the city in the island of the Seine was one principal security ; this it owed to nature, but this would not have been enough. Cæsar had conquered Paris ; and, as if he had intended the honour of his victories should be confined, by rendering it impossible that any future victor should tread in his steps, he did but what it was his custom to do every where, in a greater or less degree ; he rendered what he found of Paris impregnable. The wall he raised round the conquered city, served, at the distance of so many ages, to prevent the Normans' easy conquest. 'I have traced the remains of this ancient fortification : they have been traced by others in vain ; confusion is in the accounts of them, and people speak either too much, or nothing. I shall be at once just and candid. I saw the evident remains of the old wall, embattled with its square towers, and firmer through the effects of time in so many ages : it makes a part of the prison called the Old Chatelet. It was in this spot, it was under the defence of this remain of a former victory, that the French, under their Charles the Simple, forced those invaders to raise the most obstinate and the most bloody siege that Paris ever knew. I can see you stare with no common amazement at the sentence

sentence that tells you the Old Chatelet shews all that now remains of the Roman wall that once surrounded Paris. What, methinks I hear you say, in the true spirit of the candid reader who believes what the writer did not understand ; what are the remains of that vast fortification in the University Quarter, near St. Victor ? what that, between the Grand Bouleuerd of St. Antoine and the Porte St. Martin ? I will tell you what they are : a strict examination has shewn that there is nothing Roman in them. The wall shews its own date, and that date reflects glory where you would little think it : on the English. They were evidently the work of Philip Augustus, or done in the reigns of John and Charles the Wise ; who found more difficulty to stop the course of British valour, than their ancestors that of Norman hunger. The means of war are as difficult as its several calls ; and the noblest are always the most difficultly defeated. Peace with the Normans raised the spirit of the succeeding Robert to revive the old taste of enlarging and adorning the city : the abbeys of St. Genevieve and St. Germain were, in his reign, restored to the condition in which we see them now, some trifles only excepted. And so far will superstition raise itself in the public spirit, that it was in this reign too that the monks, who wanted the ground on which the Chateau de Nauvert stood, damned it with the scandal of evil spirits : they gave the name of the Rue d'Enfer to an adjoining street ; and superstition pulled down the stones of that venerable castle somewhat faster than music called together and arranged those of the Theban wall. Lewis the Sixth added St. Victor to these enclosures of the city : but it is a monarch of a very different character to whom the now vast city owes
 the

the first considerable additions on either side the river. I do not know how it is with you, but I never read the story of Philip Augustus, but I feel myself warmed with all that animated veneration with which we enter into the characters of those who have been more than great; who have been also good. When I recollect his achievements in war against unequal numbers, and better discipline; against an enemy at once elated with success, and desperate in fortune; I place very few of the heroes, whose sounding names have been handed down to us, before him: when I view his more tranquil honours; when I see him, amidst a scarce secure peace, meditating the improvements as well as adding to the ornaments of his country, the parent of industry and patron of the arts, I see most of the illustrious of old time as his inferiors. It is little of him to say, he was the greatest monarch that ever France produced: yet such is the blindness of mankind to good; such their partiality to acts at once horrible to nature, and hateful to humanity, that this is more than is allowed him: and while a thousand cry up the Fourteenth Lewis to the skies, for enterprizes which speak him perfidious to his allies, and a scourge upon his country; the name of this second Aurelius is unknown!

You are not to be told, that it was in his reign, it was under the patronage of his favour, that the Gothic architecture arrived at the greatest height at which France ever saw it. We see numberless testimonies of this, in the structures of that taste raised in different parts of the kingdom at that time. That part of the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, which was finished under his auspices,

auspices, is alone enough to prove that it never was higher in excellence.

The descendants of Philip inherited, with his crown, his spirit. They continued to add to Paris in a very extensive manner, till the Croisades exhausted too much of their finances to leave them power of doing a great deal : and the English wars which succeeded, made it impossible to spare either money or hands to the carrying into execution many very august plans, which had been laid down to them.

To prosecute the enquiry after the advances of Paris to its present extent and superb appearance: it must be acknowledged, that the spirit of building was lost after the death of their Philip le Bel, and did not revive till after a very long interruption: it appeared in no degree of lustre till the time of Charles the Sixth. While he held the reign, an interval of repose was given to France, by the peace of Bretigny concluded between our Third Edward, and John his Father, at that time a prisoner in England. This he employed in aggrandizing his capital; and this period produced the two magnificent palaces of les Tournelles and St. Paul, the ground of which is now in part taken up by the Place Royale in the Rue St. Antoine.

A vast deal was indeed done by this monarch in adding to the magnificence of Paris: its streets were extended, and a number of superb buildings erected. But after this nothing was added till the reign of Francis the First. This monarch's turn for building gave prospect of the greatest additions to it; and they were not vain. Francis had liberality

liberality equal to his public spirit ; and he excelled all his predecessors in taste for architecture. It was not Paris only that became great during his reign ; he was covering the face of the whole kingdom with edifices, and other works of magnificence and splendor. This prince no sooner indeed saw himself at liberty from his Spanish confinement, than he laid the plan of Fontainebleau, Chambord, and many other palaces, which he saw finished during his life. It was he who undertook the great work of enlarging the streets of Paris, which were before too narrow : an arduous task ; but, by degrees, in a very great measure accomplished. Philip Augustus had built a Louvre in the Gothic style ; and in its place Francis erected one after the Italian taste, to which the French had been, till that time, strangers.

The arts and sciences owed their restoration, in a great measure, to the house of Medicis. In proportion as the general taste improved in France, the Valois kings grew out of humour with the yet standing edifices, erected in less happy times, by their predecessors. The example which Francis had set them, by pulling down the old Louvre and the Hotel de St. Paul, was too spirited not to be followed. The rest of the Gothic structures shook to their foundations ; and, as if Paris was at this time to rise above its former greatness, an accident facilitated the otherwise difficult, though desirable attempt. Charles the Ninth had an eye upon the Tournelles ; he wished it down, that he might have a pretence for building the Thuileries, to supply its place. At this singular period it was that Henry the Second was killed by the count Montgomery, at a tournament at this place. Catherine de Medicis took occasion at this

this melancholy event to request her son to pull down the building, that she might no longer have the distressful scene in her eye.

It was easy for a prince of Charles's disposition to comply with what himself had so much mind to : so down fell the fatal scene. The Tournelles were no more, and the ground on which so many crowned heads had seen their residence, was laid out into streets. The Louvre, which his grand-father had in a great measure rebuilt, he enlarged ; and his mother completed the plan intended in the destruction of the Tournelles, by joining to it the Thuilleries. Philibert de l'Orme was the architect ; and he acquired, from this structure, the honourable name of the Palladio of France.

You see now, my dear *** , Paris, from an humble origin, and after the absolute destruction of most of the buildings by which its first increase was made, by the hands of enemies ; rising, by slow degrees, toward the state in which we now admire it. It became, from this time, an act of popularity to enlarge and beautify the capital ; and a succession of kings were pleased with opportunities of flattering their own vanity by the same act by which they ingratiated themselves with the people.

Henry the Fourth no sooner found himself quiet in the throne, than he fell in with the plan of his predecessors. He finished the Pont Neuf, and he received the acknowledgments of the people in an equestrian statue, which they erected there to him. The Place Royale, in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, and the Place Dauphinée, be-

fore the Old Palace, rose under his auspices : and the applauses of his people, on these acts of public spirit and magnificence, urged him to take in the Fauxbourg St. Germain into the enclosure of Paris ; to widen the quays, on both sides the river ; and to do many other acts of public pomp and utility.

Courtiers do not only imitate the vices of their sovereign : let him shew them a better example, and they will not fail to emulate his virtues. The favourites of Henry saw his taste, and they saw his reasons for it. They pursued his plan ; they ingratiated themselves at once with their prince and with the people ; a thing not often to be done by the same action, by raising hotels in different quarters of the enlarged city : the suburbs that had been taken into its limits were decorated with many of these elegant and pompous edifices at a time when the city put on a face of grandeur equal to its enlarged extent.

Thus Paris saw itself rising to honour and importance, in the reign of the Fourth Henry ; nor was the prospect lost in the succeeding one : the people continued to feel the same warmth and veneration for their grand city as for their grand monarch, and made no scruple of being stripped and plundered, when the advantages were so conspicuous. Mary de Medicis, in this reign, laid out sums that would have startled the Roman luxury ; and the cardinal Richlieu disbursed treasures which would have sunk the coffers of an eastern emperor. Paris now smiled upon all the former attempts to aggrandize her, as little and unimportant. Edifices rose, that, while they filled the hearts of the people with a noble pride, astonished

astonished the eyes of foreigners. But even this was nothing to what followed : when what flatters the ambition of a prince, falls in with the approbation of his people, where is the stop ? what was great in a former age, eclipses, if it be not eclipsed by, what is executed in the succeeding : all that Philip and that Francis, all that Catherine and Richlieu had done in the aggrandizing the capital, was nothing when compared with the plans of Colbert, authorized and supported by the Fourteenth Lewis. These were not confined indeed to the city alone ; the people were taught to look upon the whole nation as their city, and they received as well the proposals for aggrandizing the other residences of their idolized monarch.

We have seen the period under which Paris had most opportunities of rising to its envied eminence : we have seen the time when the views of its monarchs were extended no farther. It was now otherwise : the ambition of that monarch cost so much, so immense a treasure ; and with that took off so many hands, and so far alienated the views of that proud prince, that a few only of the vast schemes of Colbert could be put in execution ; and a concurrence of accidents determined these not to be those in particular which favoured Paris.

It was good policy in Lewis to enlarge the views of his people to the looking on his whole kingdom as the scene of dignity ; since he hated in his heart that city which had hitherto engrossed both their and their princes' attention. The crown had devolved on Lewis when an infant. His mother, Anne of Austria, was a woman by

no means qualified for recommending herself as regent: she was arrogant and insolent in her natural disposition; and she was under the sole direction of a churchman, in whom those vices were yet more conspicuous. Mazarin was indeed the regent: the people of Paris were the first who felt the tyranny, and they resented it. They at many times threatened, and once almost broke out into rebellion: their steps were followed by those of the whole kingdom; and it was not a wonder that the cardinal hated those, who hated him and crossed the purposes of his ambition. From him the hatred to Paris transfused itself into the regent; and from the mother it flowed in upon the son. Lewis the Fourteenth grew up under a distaste to the capital, which continued with him during his whole life; and which his successor inherits. What had been easily implanted in the mind of this young king, was indelibly fixed there by the conduct of the Parisians, during the troubles which the insolence of the queen mother and the ambition of Mazarin gave rise to. The prince of Conde headed the malcontents against the Mazarinian faction (for so it was universally called at that time) in the famous action with the royal troops in the fauxbourg St. Antoine. The Parisians, on this occasion, confirmed in their sentiments by the earnest solicitations of madam de Montpensier, a princess of the blood; and at her instigation fired their cannon upon the royal troops, and opened their gates to the prince who opposed them. All that had been inculcated as suspicion, now appeared certainty to Lewis: and these early principles were so carefully fixed in his mind, that he never shook them off. It was owing to this, that in the succeeding part of his reign the schemes of Colbert, which regarded the city of Paris, were

thrown aside, under the pretence of being delayed, and all the treasure that his arms could spare, was lavished on Versailles and Marli.

From this time Paris has not been the scene of royal magnificence. The immense sums which have been expended, have been on the palaces where the monarch resides; and he has paid little regard to the improvement of a city, of which neither he nor his predecessor, by their own choice, ever entered the streets.

LETTER VII.

YOU will say, I have traced the origin of the magnificence of Paris, to shew my reading. You know, after the history of my own country, that of France has always been my favourite study. The subject carried me farther than I had imagined at first sight; but I know you will pardon my being full on a theme which, though it has claimed a great share of my attention, has not had much of yours. I have been prolix in speaking of the city itself; I shall not be tedious on the several particulars it contains: others have been sufficiently so. I had determined to write to you of any thing that had not been made familiar to me by others, as it will probably be new also to you: as for the rest, *sicco pre-tream pede*. You will give me leave to pass them over lightly. They have given me vast pleasure, who am present; but I have not the vanity of my own abilities, to suppose I can give you any more by description, than others have already.

I shall

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I shall not give you the height or the dimensions of the cathedral of Notre Dame : the venerable pile, part of it more than a thousand, much of it more than six hundred years old, does honour to the Gothic strength, at the same time that it supports its character for beauty. There is an air of grandeur, I must confess, in the simplicity of the ancient taste, which has been so happily revived throughout Europe, from the success of the Italian architects ; but there is an awe and veneration in those Gothic piles, that to me seems better suited to the solemnities of religion. Perhaps this is but the prejudice of custom and education ; I do believe it is no more : but I find myself unable to conquer it. How many of our most established principles may, if we dare to examine them, have no better foundation but tremble to think of it.

The front of this noble edifice is admired for its sculpture ; but this does not strike me equally to many of its beauties. The pillars which support the roof, more than an hundred in number, fill the eye in a very happy manner. An accident has very lately discovered what had not been suspected till that time, that this cathedral of Paris has been begun upon the ruins of some pagan temple : a vault was dug in the year 1710, for the burying the archbishops ; the earth had not been opened before, and, to the astonishment of the workmen and those who employed them, a number of antique sculptures were discovered there. Four of these are still preserved in the chapter, and have afforded ground for a multitude of conjectures. They are done in the finest marble, and contain representations of Jupiter,

Castor, and Vulcan; and one of them a votive of the Nautæ Parisiaci, is elegant; it deserves, and perhaps I shall give it, a separate examination.

I do not know whether you would not give the palm, were you here, to Westminster Abbey: it is larger every way than the Notre Dame; but there is an elegance in the structure of the double iles on each side of the body of this church, and in the form of the rose windows, that to me excels every thing of the Gothic taste that I have seen.

The ornaments of later date are worthy the elegance of the edifice which holds them. The great altar, the joint work of Lewis the thirteenth and fourteenth, taking in the whole, is at least the most magnificent, if I may not allow it the most elegant thing, I have seen. There is a Virgin at the foot of the cross, sitting, with a dead Christ upon her knees, that, for a modern sculpture, claims very high praise: but you know I was early debauched in my taste by what I had seen of the antique in England; and I do not imagine I shall be cured of the disease in Italy. To allow the authors of those works however all their superiority, there is a vast deal of merit in this: it is of Carrara marble, and it has been a happy block. The face of the Virgin has great softness; there is justness in composition, but there wants the bold expression in the one, and the noble ease of attitude in the other, that would have flowed from the chisels of two thousand years ago. I am singular, I find, in my opinion; but the principal merit of the piece, with me, is in the expressions of the muscles in the corpse; they are

not

not only in their just proportion; situation, and contortions from the posture, but they are those of a corpse. You would distinguish this, were all the rest of the figure and of the groupe hid. About this are statues of Lewis the Thirteenth and Fourteenth, offering their crowns and sceptres at her feet ; and three angels on each side ; these are of bronze, well gilt, and as large as life ; they carry the several instruments of the passion, and on the whole, have an appearance of great dignity.

I was led up, at my first entrance into the church, to a St. Christopher, the gift of an officer in the court of Charles the Sixth. Much had been said to prepossess me in favour of this statue ; but if I had heard nothing, I should have thought as meanly of it. I am apt to suspect my own taste when I differ in this manner from the rest of the world in my opinions ; but I shall always speak them. The figure is enormously large, but it wants character as well as spirit : it is a Polyphemus rather than a saint, and has not one thing beside its bigness that can have called up peoples' admiration.

Philip le Bel, when he had obtained an important and unexpected victory over his long successful enemies, the Flemings, rode into this church in his armour, to perform a vow which he had made to the Virgin, as he went to the engagement. The memory of this signal transaction is preserved by a statue of that monarch, big as the life, on horseback, and armed at all points according to the fashion of the times, the vizor of his helmet down : it stands facing the choir ; and, though so little taken notice of, that I doubt whether you have heard of it, I do assure you there

is something in the air and manner of it, that pleased me greatly. The sepulchral monuments are numerous, but not in general either elegant or superb: the best are of the duke and duchess of Alanson; of archbishop du Harlai, and his predecessor in the see of Paris; du March; of some of the family of the Ursins, fertile of great men, under the Valois kings; and the dukes of Retz, allied to the house of Medicis. The body of the church, as well as the choir, are ornamented with a number of scripture pieces: the best French hands have been employed on them; and some, which are Le Brun's, I saw with pleasure; in general, however, they are more conspicuous for number than merit.

L E T T E R V I I I.

WHEN I gave you an account of what I thought remarkable in the cathedral of Paris; and of some things which people, more easily pleased, have thought so, though I did not: I omitted the mention of one of its chapels: it was not that I forgot, or overlooked it. It is hardly decent to laugh in the review of a place of worship. You have often rallied the humour of our errant knights in poetry or romance: I have joined with you in the wonder and in the contempt of stories that represented to us men of personal valour, and the highest sense of honour, arming to fight when they had no cause of quarrel, traversing whole forests and deserts, starved more than Ulysses after his shipwreck, and courting all the dangers of the world; for what? in hopes of an opportunity of meeting some

some champion like themselves, with whom to fight at sight, without asking the reason ; and in a place where no eye could see the decision. I have looked on all these heroes, from the knight of la Mancha to the lowest in the list, with the same sort of eye as on the Elfin knight and Saracen in Spencer ; but here is a remain that proves them real.

You have heard of John duke of Bourbon, institutor of a whole order of this kind. The chapel now called Notre Dame de la Grace, was, in the year 1416, their chapter-house. Their symbol was a golden fetter round the left leg ; their title, Chevaliers de Fer & de l'Or. They bound themselves by the most solemn sacrament to attend the duke their sovereign into England, and there to fight, at the most desperate weapons, with any man who thought his mistress handsomer than theirs. The duke visited England ; our Fifth Harry brought him from Agincourt ; and some of the order followed him about as willingly as he came. I do not know that he thought about this order or his mistress afterwards : he never obtained his liberty, but died here, after twenty years from the day of that immortal victory.— Shall I say I am interrupted ? shall I tell you I have lost my companion ? it sometimes happens to me ; shall I plead the humble excuse, that supper cools ? I will use them when I want them : it is honester to tell you, I have no more to write. There is nothing farther in the Notre Dame that has not been described at large by our travellers, and consequently that you are not already acquainted with.

LETTER IX.

TH E Sainte Chapelle, I do not know whether you have heard of it, I do not remember that I have before, is near the cathedral. It is a Gothic structure, rather elegant than magnifique ; the work of Lewis the Ninth. But though of no singular curiosity in itself, is ennobled, if you will suffer me to speak like a Frenchman and a good catholic, beyond all the edifices in the world, by its contents. There are no less, if you will believe the legend, than the very reliques of the crucifixion. The chapel was built on purpose to receive them by the pious monarch, who had more faith than you or I in the story of their authenticity. They consist of the very Spunge that was dipped in gall and vinegar, to be presented to our Saviour on the cross ; the identical Reed which he held in his hand ; the iron of the Spear that pierced his side ; the Purple Robe in which they cloathed him ; and his Crown of Thorns : the Cross was too big for carriage, but there had been at one time a portable one cut out of the very wood of the original : but this was stolen in the days of their Henry the Third, to the inconsolable grief of the whole Romish world.

How these inestimable remains fell into the hands of Cosroes the Persian, is not told us : that monarch inclined to make a magnificent present, that would cost him little, to the Greek emperor Heraclius, probably got some Jew to fabricate them. The story of their origin was too sacred for enquiry ; and if the man who wrought them

was

was well paid, or hanged as soon as he had done, the secret was safe. From the time of Heraclius they had been preserved from reign to reign with pious care, in one or other of the greater palaces.

Baldwyn the Second, he was, you well remember, the last of the five French emperors of Constantinople, at a time when he was at once poor and distressed by numerous enemies, his empire attacked on all sides, and his forces unable to defend it, made himself his own ambassador into France, to implore the protection and assistance of St. Lewis. Troubles on troubles fell in during his absence; danger trod upon the heels of danger; the barons were unable to inspirit or to pay the forces that preserved the empire from the joint attacks of the Greeks and Bulgarians. They had yet the sacred treasure, and the Venetians had money and faith; this was their last resource: they pawned them to the state of Venice; the sum lent on the security was thirteen thousand crowns. Lewis redeemed them: he ordered a magnificent cavalcade for their escorte; and himself and his whole court went as far as Sens to receive them. They were deposited in the chapel built for their reception, and have not been taken out since, except twice, once to restore the dying Lewis the Eleventh, the other time to avert the vengeance of heaven from the city, foreseen from their offences: whether it be that their not succeeding on these occasions; or that the bones of St. Genevieve are found to answer the purpose full as well; neither the monarchs nor the city have presumed to take the same liberty with them since.

You will be asking whether it were worth while to have made this famous chapel, and its more famous contents the subject of a letter? Peace to your censures: though these are imaginary treasures, there are real ones. They shew a variety of officials on vellum, finely illuminated, and among them the greatest curiosity of this trifling kind that I have anywhere seen, the mass-book of the great Charlemagne; the gospels are written in gold. If these deserve but a limited regard, there is one to which the most extravagant praise will be allowed, by all who see it, too little: it is a cameo on a perfect and beautiful oriental agate; the largest engraved gem in the known world, and, of all that I have seen, infinitely the finest. The story, a truce to the suspicious and the chimeric guesses of the professed antiquarians, is the apotheosis of Augustus. I have been told of a subject of like kind in the treasury at Vienna; but those who praise that highly, yet give this the preference. I do not know that I ever studied a piece of antiquity with equal pleasure. Charles the Fifth, who enriched the Sainte Chapelle with this indeed invaluable remain of ancient sculpture, took the story to be a scripture history; the frame in which it is fixed evidently shews this; perhaps had it been known what it truly was, it never had been purchased. I am astonished when I look upon the workmanship of the ancient hands. All that they have told us of the spirit and genius of their statuaries is confirmed by what we see on these parallel designs. The larger reliques of the earliest times have been in the way of a thousand accidents, and most of these on which the greatest praises have been lavished, are lost: these lesser works have been preserved; their size, their matter,

ter, and their form have rendered them more easily preserved : and while we have these, I shall not scruple to believe the larger works of masters of the same time, which have obtained more honours from those who saw them, have deserved them. When I contemplate the deified Augustus on this table, I do not wonder at the exclamations of those who saw the works of a Phidias : I conceive the sense of that admiration, that astonishment with which men saw the faces which he gave, in his statues, to the gods and heroes. The figure of the emperor, in this piece, is more than mortal ; and it is most evident that the sculptor in this case, as well as the statuary in the other, worked not from any model of living or of before commemorated dignity or beauty. They were men of exalted conceptions ; they had genius to figure to themselves what majesty and elegance superior to mortal was ; the mind's eye could conceive what that of the head could not see, a perfect face ; and all the nobleness of that idea descended on the gem, or into the marble.

Those were indeed days of statuary and sculpture : they were days of painting too, in which Demetrius was condemned as never rising beyond the excellencies which he saw in nature ; in which Dionysius was allowed but a small share of fame, and the censure passed upon him was, that he drew men barely as they were. I have reverenced the old Lysippus for despising his cotemporary sculptors on the same foundation. “ They make “ men (said he, smiling) such as they are found “ in nature ; I, such as they might be made, if “ accidents did not prevent her course.”

Romantic as all this may seem, my dear ***,
 there requires no more than an acquaintance with
 the pieces left us by these very men to shew that
 they had justice in all they said. Nature affords
 us a thousand bodies, wanting in one part or
 other of that beauty which some other, deficient
 perhaps in another part, possesses ; for one that
 but approaches towards elegance in all. When
 the painter or the statuary is to represent the re-
 semblance of a particular person, he must adhere
 to what he sees in it ; but when he enters on hi-
 story, as left at large, when consummate beauty
 of figure, or unblemished dignity of mind is all
 he has to express, what is it that shall tye him to
 a slavish imitation of imperfections ? what is he
 then to do ? When Zeuxis was to figure Helen,
 he copied the several graces of five Grecian beau-
 ties ; and from what was excellent in each, he
 finished what Cicero gives us as the first and per-
 fectest example of beauty. But to the genius of
 a Phidias this stratagem were poor : not content
 with the examining five, he would have con-
 templated the beauties of the whole race of wo-
 men : this was his practice. From these he would
 not have servilely borrowed any thing, or made
 his Helen one woman at the breast, another in the
 hand, and on the whole a composition of a thou-
 sand discordant parts : much otherwise. From the
 success of nature in the several parts of these, he
 would have formed in his own well ordered mind
 the possibility of her having joined in some one
 form all these perfections, and rendered them
 much greater by the combination in a perfect
 whole. Every part gives grace to every other ;
 that which never existed, nor ever will exist in na-
 ture, and have been thus brought together in his
 mind,

mind, and from the idea he would have formed that beauty which he intended should be acknowledged perfect by all the world.

If there be difficulty in representing a perfect mortal beauty, there must be infinitely more in giving the figure of a superior being. This there was no way of executing but upon the plan of this idea of perfection. Others degraded deities into men, because human excellence was all they could arrive at, who had not raised their thoughts to any thing greater. On the contrary, Phidias made his Gods as he conceived them; and as his conceptions were his own, as none else had or perhaps could come up to them, the expression of them in the marble was a new form, and proclaimed at first sight something that was not mortal.

Perhaps there is yet more difficulty in the intermediate form, the deified hero. The dignity of an immortal must be given, and yet the mortal must not be quite thrown off. It is impossible for words to picture the mixed character; but the sculpture on this cameo displays it fully. The dignity of Phidias' Jupiter, the softness of the Helen of that Zeuxes, are blended in it. I never viewed a face with such admiration: but this makes but a small part of the piece; there are in all twenty-four figures in it, in relief, and if not of equal, yet all of excellent workmanship. Augustus is in the habit of the Olympian Jove; and till I saw it, I never had entertained a true conception of the ancient statuary, so celebrated as the works of the Phidias whom I have named, and his cotemporaries: it is Jupiter, and yet it is Augustus; it is at once a mortal and a divinity.

Livia

Livia is in the form of the Argive Juno; the Genius of Rome makes a surprising and a glorious figure: there are also among the more conspicuous faces, those of Julius Cæsar, Julia, Nero, Drusus, Tiberius, Germanicus, and Caligula.

I hardly wonder at the story of this sculpture not being made out in the dark times in which it was deposited in this chapel. There required a knowledge in antiquities, a conversance with the remains of it, to understand it. There is indeed nothing that gives me higher satisfaction in the prosecution of this, as they are pleased to call it who do not understand it, dry study, than the happiness of one part of it making out and explaining another. How know the faces of Julius and Augustus? how distinguish that one of the other figures is Nero, and another Tiberius? idle and chimeric conjectures! methinks I hear some unhallowed lips exclaim. We know them from other remains of the same period; and though they are not named here, we have seen them on medals, with their names around them. Wherever we have met with them on coins, they are the same; wherever we have met with the same face in sculpture, or in painting, the story in which it is engaged confirms the opinion founded in remembrance; one part of the groupe explains the other; and we are as certain as of the faces of our most intimate acquaintance. But I shall tire you: you have not the fondness for these studies that runs through my whole frame, but you have eyes open to conviction; and I know you will be pleased to see that which you have been used to suppose mere curiosity, rendered useful.

LETTER X.

A Very good friend of yours as well as mine, my dear ***, has often declared himself dissatisfied, that he has yet contributed nothing to your entertainment : he had resolved not to deviate from his immediate road to do this, but at length an opportunity offered, and he has seized upon it. You know writing is troublesome to him ; I do not know whether you are sensible, but I assure you I have long since been made so, that it is more troublesome to his readers : one is vexed with the man who writes illegibly what one has a mind to read. Accept me as his amanuensis. I think his subject but a dry one, but he is positive it will please you. I have been charmed with his manner of prosecuting it, but I have a double advantage, I am eager in the study to which it belongs, and I have seen what only can be described to you. This preface is too long : but to the matter.

You have heard of the plaster of Paris, of which it has lately been so much a fashion to make busts and figures : it is made from a stone dug at Montmartre in this neighbourhood, and has its name from the capital, where is the principal mart for it. M——'s has been these two days in the pits ; while I have been studying the unknown sculptor of two thousand years ago, he has been in as much conversation as his moderate share of French will let him, with the diggers of those stones. This morning he threw some fragments of his collection into my way at breakfast. I was going to sweeten my tea with them : you never

never saw any thing so perfectly like loaf sugar as the stone of which this plaster is made ; there are some pieces of it coarser, these resemble the less refined loaves ; but the finest are more white and clean than the most highly refined of the Dutch manufacture.

He led me to his room, on a table in which there was an arrangement of a multitude of the pieces or lumps of it, in their natural form as taken from the pit. The finest of them are white as snow ; and though two or three inches in thickness, they are little inferior to crystal in transparency : they are all broad and flat. It does not, I find, lie in whole continued rocks, as the stone does in our English quarries ; it is naturally in these flat loose pieces ; they are of different sizes, and lie among a kind of loose marle, a good deal like that blue and red marle which they use at your seat in Leicestershire for manure.

At one end of the table lay a number of vast cakes of a transparent substance, resembling ice. I have seen the lumps of Muscovy ifinglass, with flakes of which my sisters used to cover pictures. On taking a piece more than a foot long, and more than an inch in thickness, from among these, I no sooner saw it composed of flakes in the like manner, and ready to split at the least touch, than I declared it the same. The sagacity of M—'s surprized me : among the apparatus to his microscope, which always is a part of his baggage, he had a little lump of ifinglass ready to mend the sliders : he slipped off a flake of one and of the other ; he bade me mind, that the ifinglass would bend any way, and recover itself to its flatness by its own elasticity : a flake of the other

other could not be bent without breaking : he told me this alone was proof that they were perfectly different substances ; but he convinced me of it, by putting the two flakes into the fire ; that of the Montmartre stone calcined to a white powder in an instant ; and all the force of the continued heat did not at all affect the other. He surprized me more by telling me, that though this and the ifinglass, which seemed so much alike, were perfectly different ; yet this and the plaster stone, which seemed as different as ice and sugar, were in effect the same. The flat and perfectly transparent stone, he told me, was found indiscriminately with the common plaster, and is no other than that very substance, only under a more perfect form. It answers the same kind of purposes, only keeping up its prerogative of excellence, as the other : and when calcined makes that beautiful white mass which we see in those figures sold at our shops. This more pure and elegant mass, under the same management, hardens into a kind of marble. There needs only a slight burning of these stones to make them fit for grinding to powder ; and after that the dust is wetted with common water, and made so thin that it will run ; in this condition it is cast into moulds, and it presently hardens on the one part into a softer, and on the other into a firmer matter. The variety of busts and figures which you see, are made by this management of the common plaster of Paris ; and the slabs in imitation of marble, of the fine flat stone. You have seen tables imitating marble, and very nearly as hard as some of the softer kinds of it, on which there has been pictured a card, a book, or a piece of fruit ; they are all made of this fine transparent stone, which is dug in the Montmartre pits. The

greater part of what is wrought into figures in England, is, I believe, the produce of our own country. I remember to have seen pits of it in Yorkshire, and some of the midland counties: but it is coarse and poor in comparison of the Montmartre kind; and the statues formed of it are of inferior value. The flat stone is the produce of the French pits alone; and it was long before it was discovered that it was from this the artists of that nation made their artificial marble: if it be not known yet in England, I shall be glad of having informed them of it.

I am to confess to you, that I was backward in taking my warm friend's word about two so very unlike substances, being in reality the same. To one who judged only by the eye, the assertion could not but appear a very strange one; but it was soon explained to me. The plaster stone was white and gritty, the other colourless and formed of large plates, laid one upon another. The microscope soon discovered to me that this difference, strong and striking as it appeared, was no more than superficial. He called me in a moment to cast my eye upon what he had placed before that machine. To the question of what it was, I answered, one of those flat and pellucid stones. He removed the glass, and shewed me that he had crumbled to pieces a corner of one of the other stones, and that what I had seen under that enlarged view as a vast flake of the other kind, was in reality no more than a single granule or separated particle of the other. It was evident from this, that the two bodies so different in appearance to the unassisted sight, were in reality the same; and that all the true distinction was, that nature had in the one formed the flat mass large, and deposited

fited it single, whereas in the other many of the smaller had been thrown together. On directing the assisted eye towards the whole mass, this was yet more evident ; and when in that view, every fragment was enlarged to the full size of the single flake ; the whole appeared a rough rock, composed of a multitude of spangles thrown together.

Every particle thus swelled to the size of the whole flake, was of the same figure, oblong and irregularly angulated. The rhomboidal stones of a pellucid matter formed in our clay pits, and which M—s tells me, though he cannot tell me why, the naturalists call selenites, moon-stones, are of a substance nearly resembling these : you may remember the workmen picked out many of those from the clay thrown up in digging your well, and your sisters honoured them with a place in your grotto. These flakes are perfectly like those bodies in texture, colour, and transparence, only that they are not as those, regularly angular, but abrupt and unequal at the ends. Such are the single and detached great pieces, such the small granules of the complicated mass. I was now convinced they were the same in all respects, and it remained to experiment upon their nature.

My sagacious friend seems informed, not only of the form of the things he studies, but of all that relates to their uses and management ; he promised to shew me the manner of forming the plaster from these stones of both kinds, and to give me proof of what he had said as to the superior quality of that made from the pellucid or flaky kind. I have been used to be terrified from experimenting by the furnaces and apparatus de-

clared to be necessary in all the books of chemistry. I find when people have a mind to use the art without pomp and parade, these things are in a great measure unnecessary.

A common fire served in the place of the furnaces, and all the other requisites for the calcining the stones, and a very moderate degree of heat does the whole work. M—'s put a lump of each kind into a clear part of the fire; and by that time they were red hot, took them out calcined: both the one and the other were now of a snow white, and the change was most perceived in the flaky kind, because it had totally lost its beautiful transparency. These were separately powdered in a mortar, and as the powder made from the finer kind was not sufficiently burnt, he gave it a recalcination: the elaboratory of a chemist would have furnished some hard named vessel for this purpose; but in our hotel a common fire-shovel performed it perfectly well.

I cannot but mention to you a circumstance in this operation, which pleased me extremely; the difference between solids when in powder, and fluids, never had appeared to me in so inconsiderable a light as it did in this process. The fire-shovel was filled with the powder of the flaky stone, and set on the fire; when thoroughly heated, the powder did not receive the action of the fire, as you would have expected, without motion; it quickly began to stir, and toward the end of the time moved and lifted up and down, exactly in the manner of boiling water.

The powder of the other kind had been sufficiently burnt before, this now was also ready for service.

vice. M—s prepared his molds, and wetted both separately ; he cast them into the places severally prepared for them, and from the common kind was produced in a few minutes the bust I send you ; from the other, the little slab which accompanies it. He charges me to apologize for the coarse and clumsy manner in which they are done ; but I flatter myself you will find the bust much superior, in point of its matter, to the generality of those you meet with in town ; and the slab very little inferior, either in colour or hardness, to alabaster.

I had curiosity, after I had been thus perfectly informed as to the nature and use of the two kinds, to enquire the opinion of my friend, how it had happened that two stones, perfectly the same in their principles, and even in their structure, when carefully examined, for such he had proved them to be, came in the same place to be formed in so different a manner ? My friend drew up his countenance, and told me, it would be hard to take the compasses necessary to answer my question clearly ; however, said he, what a few words will do towards it, shall not be wanting.

He observed, that the whole substance of the earth, and all things contained in it, were originally formed of particles separated from water. So says the Mosaic account of the creation ; and so have said all the philosophers of old time, without the assistance of inspiration, from the mere principles of reason. There was a time, he also observed, when all the solid matter of the globe, at least that of its whole surface to a certain depth, far beyond all that we dig in mining, was again taken up and suspended in water : the

hardest rocks are evidently composed of particles once thus swimming in a fluid, since sea shells are found immersed in them, and could not otherwise have been let into them. These two kinds of plaster stone, continued he, were in the same manner formed of particles separated from water: if we would know how, we may see it explained in the concretion of common salt. Water will dissolve it, and will retain it dissolved; but as soon as the sun and wind, or the more speedy operation of a fire, have evaporated some part of the water, the salt can be no longer sustained in what remains; but is separated, and forms a solid body, or a number of solid bodies, adhering to the sides of the vessel.

It is not only, continued M——s, the general formation of those stones that is thus explained by that of the shooting of a dissolved salt into a solid form. Truth, when brought into a system, generally answers many more purposes than were at first expected. If the water have evaporated slowly, the salt forms itself in its solid state more regularly; if it have been carried off quickly, the masses are more confused. Supposing it common sea salt that had been dissolved in the water, the regular figure of its crystal is a cube: if the water be evaporated gradually, the salt shoots into these regular crystals, and all the particles are large, transparent, and of a cubic form; if, on the contrary, the evaporation have been quicker, the operation becomes confused, and instead of large and separate crystals, there are formed irregular masses formed of smaller, less regular, and less pellucid crystals, thrown together without any order. It is not uncommon in our salt pans, where the process is continually performed, and all

all parts of it not equally attended to, to see different quantities of the salt in the different parts of the pan of quite various figures ; that which has concreted during a fiercer heat is in confused masses, that which has concreted during a flower evaporation is in larger and separate crystals.

In the same manner, continued he, with great clearness and propriety, the particles which composed this plaster stone of both kinds, were once suspended in a fluid, in water surrounding and covering the face of this globe. As the larger and single grains, and the masses formed of smaller are in the former case the same salt, so in this the matter forming the large and pellucid flakes, and the complex and less clear masses, is the same. The fluid evaporated in different degrees and quantities, and when it passed off slowest gave opportunity for the formation of the clearer, larger, and finer flakes : when more rapidly, the same matter formed itself into smaller flakes, though of the same general form and shape ; and these coalesced, through the hurry of the operation, into lumps of different bigness, according to that hurry, or to the somewhat flower evaporation.

You will acknowledge, as I did, that every thing was very fairly explained by this system, except for one unlucky circumstance, which is, that plaster of Paris is not soluble in water ; that salt thrown into that fluid will instantly melt in it, but that if this stone lies forever at the bottom of a river, it will not lose a grain of its weight. I made the objection, and M—s, after a preparation, such as had preceded the other, went through the difficulty in a better manner than any

who have written on it, and upon very different principles. This philosophy, like every thing else about him, is new; but you will be pleased, if you are not perfectly satisfied with, it. You shall have it in another letter; for the present, good night; I have carried myself beyond my time, almost beyond my paper.

LETTER XI.

THE objection which you have raised against my account of the formation of the stone of Mountmartre, holds good, said M—s, equally against that of all the other mineral bodies in the world. It is most certain, as I told you before, that the hardest rocks have been formed, as well as these softer and smaller masses, from particles separated from a fluid; and it is equally plain, that they are all of them at present indissoluble in water. It is certain indeed that many of them are so in all fluids; if another liquor therefore, and not water, could have been called out upon the surface of the earth on this occasion, it would not have answered the purpose, according to our present knowledge; water therefore might answer the purpose as well as any other: and it is certain, that there was only water to affect it.

There required no more power, there was no more difficulty to the Creator to form the particles of which all these hard bodies were to be made, in water, than to form them out of water. If we enquire into the depths of nature, to know, what

what power it is that causes what we call the crystallization of salts, we shall find that it is attraction. While a certain portion of the fluid swam about the yet unconnected particles, they were more attracted by that water than by one another, but as soon as a part of the water was gone they were brought nearer to one another than before, and in that state they are attracted by one another more powerfully than they are severally attracted by the water ; therefore they get together and compose these visible masses. So says Newton ; so acts nature : they are always correspondent to one another.

On this principle let us suppose the particles of all hard bodies created in a state of suspension in a fluid, lodged in that immensity of water which covered the whole surface of the earth, as we are expressly told by Moses, at the time of the creation ; the fluid was in such quantity at this time in proportion to those particles, that they were attracted more by its particles, than by one another, because in the great quantity of fluid they were kept at a distance. In this state they must have all remained suspended in the fluid. We are told that the earth was formed out of this water ; nay, we are told how it was formed out of it : “ The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters ; ” the expression is pompous, but if one says, The wind blew upon the water, it is as good a translation from the Hebrew ; nay, it is the same sense very fairly, in plainer words. Let us look candidly and freely into things, and not fear to offend the Divine majesty by enquiring into his works ; it will on the contrary please him, and is doing him rational honour : the winds and all the elements are his ministers, and are made to obey

obey his purposes ; nor is there less of power or of wisdom in performing any thing by their means, than in doing it without them.

An earth was to be formed ; the solid particles of which it was to be composed, were suspended in a fluid : by what means were they to be got together, and made to concrete into a solid mass ? we know this is to be effected only by that attraction which takes place upon a lessening of the quantity of the water. Evaporation was necessary ; and in that state in which things were, what material agent was there in being, by which to bring about that evaporation, but the winds ? We acknowledge that nothing, after the effect of heat, is of equal force in the matter of evaporation with wind : we see that even heat, the genuine parent of evaporation, assisted by winds, is of double energy ; the wet streets are more dried in two hours of windy, than in a day of the brightest still weather : and to bring it nearer to the present case, the bay-salt makers, whose pans are pits of clay, whose fire the sun, find more salt is made in one windy, than in ten of the hottest serene days.

We have considered the water, which at the time of the creation certainly, and which very probably a second time, at the universal deluge, for all our philosophy cannot inform us what the water was that brought about that great catastrophe, nor whence it was brought ; as impregnated with the particles of all hard bodies, kept suspended in it, because kept at a distance from one another by the quantity of the solvent. It pleased the Creator of the universe to form this globe, it pleased him to form it of the materials suspended

suspended in that fluid : we are even told the means by which he effected it, by evaporation, the only natural means. There was yet no sun, there was therefore no material agent but that commotion of air which drives it in a current, and forms what we call wind. The consequence of wind blowing fiercely, and in a continuance, on that immense body of water, was the carrying a part of it up into the atmosphere : the remainder was not sufficient to retain the particles suspended as they had been in the larger quantity : and what must have been the consequence? That which was, a precipitation and concretion of the hard and solid particles, and the formation of this earth.

Is it strange, after this, to assert, that all things of the mineral world have been formed by a separation of their particles out of water ; or is it chimerical to explain the forms and differences in figure and congeries of these bodies on that principle, and to account for their varieties by the analogy between this operation, submitted only at such a distance of time to the reason ; and that of salts, which we can at pleasure dissolve in water, and throw into all these forms under our eyes by the various measures of that evaporation ? You will return your question upon me, why then, if this were once the case, cannot we dissolve these stones, as we do salt, at our pleasure again in water ? The answer is not confined to a single assertion.

If we allow, that at present these several bodies cannot be dissolved in water at our pleasure, does it at all infer that they were not originally so suspended by the hands of omnipotence ? What is attraction,

attraction, and when did it begin to act? He who knew its effects best of all men, he who established its laws, and pointed out its limits and powers, Newton himself, pretends not to understand it: he does not explain, he does not attempt to explain, what it is, or how it acts; he resolves it into the immediate will of the Creator; he declares it a quality impressed by him on all matter, whose effects we see, but whose cause we are not to expect farther to understand. How know we when this principle was connected with matter? who has told us, that it was coeval and congenial with it? It may have been impressed at the very time when the earth was to be produced; it may have been wanting before: on this principle even the winds would not have been necessary to have effected what we see; and in this case that may have been the state of solid bodies before their acquiring this great power, which it is impossible for us to induce upon them afterwards. On this principle, continued M——s, with his accustomed force and perspicuity of argument, these bodies may have been formed from particles once suspended in water, although we are not able to dissolve them again; although the laws of nature now should prevent a repetition of what happened before they were established. You will allow me on this system, that these bodies may have been dissolved in water, though they cannot now be dissolved in it.

But this concession, though I have a right to it, is not necessary. I do not know any thing that is not at this time dissoluble in water. Bodies may submit to certain forms, under proper circumstances, which resist them ever so absolutely when those circumstances are wanting. I know that

that gold will lose of its weight by a continued management in water, and that the water will be impregnated with its qualities. Many operations will dispose bodies to changes, which they will not suffer without those previous operations ; and amongst those often the least important produce the greatest effects. Sulphur will dissolve iron, but not unless that iron be heated red hot : the Bohemian stone imbibes the light, and becomes luminous in the dark, but it will not do this without a previous calcination. Fire opens the bodies of all things, and it affects different ones differently ; the same heat that calcines marble into lime, runs flint into glass. These are the principles on which you will enter into the meaning of an experiment, by which you shall be convinced that this stone, though in its own form it might lie ages in water unhurt, yet is soluble in water. There requires a certain management ; there requires the assistance of fire : you shall see it employed, and you shall see the supposed impossibility performed.

After this lecture in his new philosophy, he produced a morsel of the finest kind of the Montmartre stone ; he crumbled a piece from one corner of it between his fingers : he laid the powder on a plate of glass, and placing it under the microscope, he made me acquaint myself thoroughly with the form of the particles. As I have broke this with caution, continued he, I have only destroyed the compages, without wounding the several particles. You see most of them at least entire, their figure approaches to a rhomboid, but it is not regularly such ; they are all flat, all of a certain thickness proportioned to their extent. Where so many particles are found

of the same form, it is just to conclude, that is the form which nature gives them.

These were laid by, and the lump from which they had been separated, was put into the fire : when red hot, it was thrown into a basin of water. The liquor, thus impregnated by its particles, was filtered through paper, that nothing solid might remain in it, to deceive us in the experiment. A drop of this was put upon a plate of glass, and by the microscope was discovered to be as perfectly clear as the eye had represented it. Notwithstanding the appearance, said M—s, this water is in the condition of that from which the earth was originally formed ; at least in regard to this single stone, there are suspended tho' imperceptibly in it, particles of that solid body ; the means to get them together is evaporation. When he had thus far explained to me what he was about, he held the slip of glass at a distance over the fire ; as soon as it began to smoke, he placed it again before the microscope, in an instant a circle of dry white matter was formed round the verge of the drop ; a moment after, little specks of solid matter began to appear at a small distance within that rim : these were created, as it were, under our eye, and when examined, were all of the same form and figure in all respects with the granules of the larger masses ; and they also are the same with the flat cakes of the larger kind.

I had now under my eye a proof of more than I had expected to see proved at all : here was not only an instance of a stone, in its own nature incapable of dissolution in water, dissolved and perfectly suspended in that fluid, but the very act of

concretion, by which it again assumed its proper form, was explained ; and the figure, odd as it was, of the loose masses, and of the granules of the compacted ones, was evinced to be the natural shoot of the stone. This, said M—s has explained to you the origin of the larger and finer pieces ; there yet remains to be shewn you, why all the matter contained in this suspended state, was not thus regularly separated. The heat that had been employed at the first, was very moderate ; he now held the glass nearer to the fire, and when hotter than before, placed it again under the microscope : we now saw a strong bustle in the little remainder of the fluid. Solid particles appeared in greater and greater quantity every moment ; they huddled together, they joined one another promiscuously, and the result was a rude shapeless mass, perfectly like that of the common plaster stone, only with the difference of size.

I have been long on this subject : but it entertained me greatly : I flatter myself you will not be less pleased with it. Truth and conviction are the same thing ; there is something in them that cannot but please a mind fond of knowledge, as I know yours to be, when supported by that universal charm novelty. Will you not join with me in saying, that there is a way of treating even the driest subjects under which they become agreeable ?

LETTER XII.

HAVE I not tired you with philosophy? I shall never be wearied with it. There is something in the books of the writers on these subjects, that is abstruse and perplexed; but it is much otherwise when we hear the lessons from a friend. I believe those authors, like chemists, fill their discoveries with difficulties, to enhance their value: nothing is so simple, nothing so perspicuous, as their doctrines, when instead of this parade of knowledge, they are disclosed by one who has no farther intent than being understood. Do not be alarmed, I am not introducing any more of these disquisitions to you. My observations are properly a comment on my last letter, rather than an introduction to this; but full of my friend's praise, I have not the art of being silent.

The evening served for all the operations of my microscopic chemist; I have begun the day with continued observations more immediately in my own way. The Jesuit's Church, in the Quarter of St. Anthony, is no mean piece of modern architecture; but it is loaded rather than embellished with decorations. The College of Lewis the Great, as it is called, is another church, in which I admired a library more than I had any thing in the former, though much more renowned: the Luxemburg Quarter shews us another, under the name of the Noviciate; it is not contemptible, but inferior to the first.

I have

I have much more to say of the abbey of St. Genevieve: it is the most remarkable edifice I have seen; the oldest monument of christianity in France. Clovis the Great built it, in accomplishment of a solemn vow he had made to Peter and Paul, as he marched up to the famous attack, in which he defeated the Visigoths: the battle was almost miraculously on his side, and his devotion did not sink after it. The apostles to whom it was dedicated, and in honour of whose influence it was erected, remained many ages in possession of it, as patrons; but the greatest benefits are erased out of mens' minds by time. St. Genevieve was buried there, and after some ages of disregard, how just or how unjust let us not enquire, her bones were removed out of their peaceful residence, under the great altar, and deposited in a most sumptuous shrine. The holy maid is now of use to her country; she has supplanted not only the ancient saints in the patronage of their church, but has robbed the holy reliques of the Crucifixion of their prerogative of driving fire, sword, and pestilence from the place. These ashes are now carried about the streets in procession, in time of public visitations, and those holy remains remain untouched.

In the choir of the church stands a tomb sacred to Clovis, and near it one to Clotilda his queen, the means and instrument of his conversion. But people who are acquainted with history, and with the works of the several periods, will not be brought to swallow the absurdity of supposing them erected in their time, or of a long while after it. A monument in this church that affected me infinitely more than those of all the legendary saints

and ancient heroes, was that of Des Cartes: he lies as such a man ought to lie, surrounded with the praises of not his own countrymen only, but the whole learned world. You will not suppose me intending by this praise to set him on a level with that Newton, who has done honour to our own country in a degree that eclipses all his praise: there may be very many degrees of glory below that of Newton, and the meaness of them great; but I think the very first, though yet at a vast distance, is that of Des Cartes. There is also a consideration of no little moment in his favour, more than in that of Newton's: Des Cartes had little, very little done before him; Newton lived at a time when a thousand of the best heads in the European world, had been, and even still were employed in the same kind of researches. Far be it from me to say he owed any of his great discoveries, or even the remotest hints of them, to any; but though they were his own, the road to them was easier when the general path of science had been beaten, than while it lay wholly rude and waste.

The tabernacle in which the host is deposited here, has been a continued object of admiration; it is rich, and, if expence can create magnificence, scarce any thing is superior to it. But, in my opinion, the proper objects of praise are of another kind. I am for paying my regard where, according to the elegant encomium of Ovid,

materiam superat opus,

the depository of the host in St. Genevieve could on this pretence have no claim to my applause.

Though

Though I wanted taste, such as it is, to be in raptures at this load of magnificence, I was sufficiently charmed with the Musæum; there are many valuable remains of antiquity preserved in it: the medals, though in general not a first rate collection, have yet among them some that are wanting in all the cabinets I have seen. I do not pretend to be judge enough to assert that there may not be counterfeits among them, but I have not heard it suspected. There is a Quadriarius of bronze, an inestimable piece; it is an oblong square, with an ox on each side; a Roman Congius, the most perfect you can imagine; and a multitude of other reliques of that once powerful nation. There are several mummies preserved there with great care: one of them the most beautiful and perfect I have seen. I had great pleasure in examining a clock, made so early as in the time of their Francis the First; the date is easily determined by several things about it. The mirror in which Anne of Bretagne, wife to Charles the Eighth, dressed herself, is also preserved here; the arms, which are as old as the rest of the workmanship, declare this: the art of making these utensils of glass was not then known; it is of polished steel, and the surface so bright that it is sufficiently evident from it, that our art of executing the Birmingham and Woodstock works in this metal, is not of so late origin as our partiality to our own nation, or our ignorance of the arts of other countries, and other times, would have us imagine.

The mummy which I so extremely admired among those, is, by evident marks, much the most ancient of the parcel. I do not know whe-

ther you have observed it, but of those preserved in England, at times brought over from Egypt by our travellers of curiosity, I have always found it easy to discover a difference as to the age ; and without one exception, that the most ancient are the finest. It would be hard indeed to say where we must stop in this enquiry, or to what distant period we may not refer the finest of them. We find, by indisputable authority, that the art was in use in Egypt before the time of Moses ; and we see no tendency to decay in those which are of the finest preparation. That which I have spent so much time in examining in this Musæum, may as well be four thousand years old as two.

I cannot help paying great honour to the people of the times and countries in which this method was used of preserving the bodies of their kings and illustrious persons, at the expence of the credit of our own. The utmost to which we arrive in our greatest honours, is the perpetuating the name of the man to whom we have owed our religion, or our liberty ; if that be inscribed on marble, and honoured with our praise, the body may be eaten by worms. How much nobler was it of these early people, to forbid the mangling of the corpse, to preserve from the gnawing of vermin, or the decays of putrefaction, the hand by which all that was dear to them, had been preserved : they continued the very person of the hero with his name, and gave a new light to the honours that were paid his memory.

It would be endless to enter into the disquisition of which of all the methods of burial that have been, or that are in use at this time, among different people, is the most honourable : fancy is in a great

great part to take the place of judgment in such a determination ; but I shall always honour that regard which was paid to the illustrious of antiquity at their funerals. Custom has led us to imagine, devoting the body we have loved to putrefaction, the best method ; the scene is out of our sight, and we take care to put it out of our memories : but surely there was something much more noble in the pile that blazed to heaven while it consumed the corpse, than in the little hole that receives it, as we would put a dead dog out of the way, merely that he might not be offensive. The pyramids, the obelisks, the mausoleums that rise in the different parts of the earth, and that have now stood the ravage of time so long, that there is no saying to what period thy will not stand it, are honours to those who erected, as much as to those who are deposited under them ; they are so many testimonies of the piety and respect paid by the living to the illustrious dead ; but still to hear, Under this lofty dome, Within this magnificent edifice, rot the remains of such a one, were surely ill of a piece with the rest ; the ashes were preserved by the ancient Romans, but surely the Egyptians did much more when they preserved the man.

It has been from the Jews that the Christian world learned the method of interment of the bodies of their ancestors in tombs and catacombs. They had it from the Egyptians ; and it were well if they had copied their whole form of it. We are not to imagine that they embalmed and preserved all the bodies of their kindred in this manner ; the earth would not have found a place for them ; but the great, the illustrious, men whose names would convey lessons of greatness of spirit,

of piety to heaven, or of love to their country, might well claim that honour, which became the greater, in that it could not be universal. The expence was very great, and among the people who set the world the example, the very doing it was esteemed a sacred office. Cutting the flesh was a necessary part of the operation, and a person was deputed to the performing this; but such was the regard they paid to the very inanimate bodies of those who had conferred such benefits on them, that it was the custom to beat and persecute the man who had done this hateful though necessary office; while, on the contrary, those who washed the wounds with wine, who sprinkled in the spices, and applied the preserving ingredients, were held in a degree of honour approaching to that which would have been paid to men who could have kept them alive.

When the body was thus rendered incapable of putrefaction or decay, it was rolled up in the finest linen, and covered over all with a vestment, on which, in their way of writing by hieroglyphics, there were painted the great and good actions of the immortalized hero, the rites of their religion, and emblems of his peculiar virtues: these are the now unintelligible figures with which we see them covered; figures which I have always thought it would be possible to come to a better acquaintance with. The creatures of the ancient world are known, and the describing the character by those symbols was a language common to the whole world.

When I am pleading for reviving the art of embalming, you are not to imagine that I plead for reviving the practice of it without the art.

I have

I have seen since I have been here what is called embalming at this time : defend me, heaven, from the butchery ! Perhaps it was this object of contrast that helped to set the other preparation in so fair a light to me. Instead of that general preservation, and religious regard paid to the corse among the inventors of the art, I have seen the brain of a dead man torn out through his nostrils, the whole body cut down and across, the flesh separated from the bones, the arms and legs hacked and mangled : but I forbear the distasteful subject. It were better even to rot, and become the food of the most hateful vermin, than to be preserved at the expence of so much mangling.

I do not know what you will say to a disputation upon burying, in an account of the abbey of St. Genevieve ; but I know you will take in good part what was meant to please you.

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particulars of his own observations, to you, and will add
what you may desire concerning the manners and customs of
the people in France.

LETTER XIII.

YOU will call my letters from Paris, a history of churches: you must take the accounts of what have most pleased me in the observations. The religious edifices in France, so far as I have seen of it, contain the treasures; and what is more to my purpose, and, I flatter myself, to yours, the curiosities of the kingdom. It is not a wonder it should be so in a nation where the church has at all times had so exorbitant a power, and where a superstitious care of peoples' souls has at all times rendered their bodies slaves to the inventors of that superstition. Happy England! where churchmen are, though esteemed useful, not made essential to the most important of all concerns; where, as it is supposed, a man might be happy hereafter, though he should not have raised them into a kind of secondary deities. They are content to be as happy as the first people, without aiming to be greater.

The royal abbey of St. Germain is the next object that offers to my consideration. I cannot give it more praise, any more than I can pay it more regard, than it deserves. It is at once of the number of the most august and the most ancient edifices which Christianity has to boast in this early Christian kingdom.

I have observed, with some degree of indignation and regret, the art the French saints, or their patrons and supporters, have had of supplanting one another in their honours. Nothing can be more to the glory of these dignities than

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the having edifices of worship dedicated to them, and perpetuating their names ; yet nothing is so frequent as their robbing one another of this title : there is hardly a church in France of any standing, that has not changed its saint at one time or other, if not more than once, since its foundation. This is an instance of it : I have already told you as much of two or three others, and doubt not but I shall of more. You will not be displeased to hear the story of so considerable an edifice as this.

The third son of the great Clovis, Chilbert, succeeded him in this part of his dominions. Chilbert had the good fortune to remove the seat of war, with his old enemies the Visigoths, from his own kingdom : he pursued them into the heart of Spain, and besieged Saragossa, breathing nothing but vengeance against the breakers of treaties, and violaters of the peace and of the rights of nations. The city was devoted to destruction : the soldiers skulked behind those ramparts which they were posted to defend; and the fiery Chilbert threatened very loudly on occasion of their resistance. The city had often saved the church, it was now the busines of the church to save the city : what arms had failed in, piety found it not difficult to effect. When the commander could do nothing, the bishop marched into the adverse camp ; he bribed the angry monarch to raise the siege ; the price was, what ? A piece of oak wood, asserted to have been part of the cross on which our Saviour suffered : and the tunic once worn by St. Vincent. Could the heart of a good catholic require more ? The monarch raised the siege ; and on his return, in commemoration of the riches which he had brought

brought into the city, founded this famous cloyster; he dedicated it to the Holy Cross and St. Vincent, and it was called after the saint and relique for many ages. But at length Germanus, bishop of Paris and abbot of the monastery, was buried there; the cross and the saint were at once divested of their venerable habitation, and from that day the name of the edifice is St. Germain's.

You will be surprized to hear me say, that the portal, or great entrance into the church, demanded many hours of my examination; do not be in haste to condemn those who have not celebrated it as a capital piece of architecture; it is one of the poorest of all the remains I have seen of the early Gothic style: the structure is in general faulty beyond all censure, and the ornaments barbarous to a degree of more than contempt; but in the midst of this rudeness it exhibits the only remaining monument in Paris of the Merovingian times. All that is left of the ancient structure as the work of Chilbert, is seen in this portal and the tower above it. The Normans, when they destroyed every thing about Paris, in the reign of Charles le Chauve, left only this of all that they met with of those ages.

On this entrance stand seven statues: Clovis and his queen Clotilda are two of them; the four following are their sons, Thierri, Clodimir, Chilbert, and Clotaire the First; the seventh is of Ulragotha, wife of Chilbert: two of these are more damaged than the others: on all the rest, and probably it was originally so on these also, there is a glory, or, as the virtuosi express it, a nimbus, round about the head, such as we see round the heads of the figures and images

of

of our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, and the Apostles, done in the early days of christianity. It is hard to say when this ornament came first into use; in regard to the scripture representations, it was evidently copied into them from the pagans, but with this reserve, that the nimbus of the christian figures is made simple, that of the pagans has the radii, or sun beams, issuing from it. The poets among the Romans attributed it to the deities which they introduced into their poems; Virgil talks of *Minerva nimbo effulgens*: and their statuaries, as may be seen in the remains of their works, continued and extended their compliment to the emperors and heroes; and from these it got upon their medals, and upon the coins of some of the eastern emperors; we see it evidently round that of Justin the First, Justinian, Phocas, and others, as also on the Valentinian the Second in the silver discus in the library at Geneva.

The workmanship, to a man of any degree of knowledge in the sculpture of these times, shews itself to be of that period: the persons represented are not only known from history, but carry other marks of certainty as to that particular; they have all of them scrolls in their hands, and on these there are the remains of the name of the person; this is legible on those of Clodimir and Clotair, in the rest it is more defaced. One is apt at first sight to be startled at the chlamys on the shoulders of Clovis, and of an eagle which was formerly on the summit of the sceptre. You are too well read in the French history, indeed, to need the explanation; but few would recollect that these were consular ornaments, which he and his son Childibert received, in compliment, from the emperor Anastasius, who, you well know, had

had fear enough of them to make him civil. None of the others have any sceptres in their hands at all. This, to me, marks the exact period of the sculpture ; it must have been at that time when only Clovis and Chilbert had been kings of Paris, a dignity which took in that of monarch of the Franks.

There is an eighth statue on this portal, but it is of no alliance with these ; it is a venerable figure, trampling the devil under his feet : I am apt to believe it is St. Remi ; certainly it is of some bishop.

There are not wanting tombs and monuments of these royal personages within the edifice : there stand several on each side the great altar, and one in the middle of the choir. But we are not to listen to the stories that would represent these as of equal antiquity with the statues. That of queen Ferdegoud has indeed the indelible characters of the time ; it is undoubtedly original, and, by the remains, mutilated as they are, it must have been an elegant structure. The body of the figure of the queen has been formed in mosaic, the hands and face of silver ; but the latter have been entirely, and the pieces which composed the former, partly stolen off. She has a sceptre ; and what concurs in proof of the time of the work is her dress, which is exactly with that of the statues of Clotilda and Ultragotha over the portal. Remains truly genuine always explain one another.

The rest, though there is much to mislead and deceive the eye of the observer, are modern. We know the ravage of the destroying Normans ; they defaced all, but this, that were in the abbey. These

These have indeed a face of antiquity ; the inscription is in Gothic characters, and they have had a look of age thrown on them by much art : but, excepting the Childibert, which is copied from the portal, the faces and figures are the mere effect of the sculptor's fancy. The coins of those times, extant in the cabinets of the French virtuosi, though stamped with heads, are too rude and coarse ever to have been likenesses, or to furnish any thing to the statuary. The tombs pretended to be of the same time with Ferdegoud's, or nearly, are indeed much more modern ; they were made about five centuries after the Norman devastations, in the time of king Robert, and were deposited, till the middle of the last century, in a vault under the church, where they lay till then, covered with rubbish, at which time other new ones were substituted in their room, and set up in the choir.

There is something singular in the inscription on that of Childibert ; the monks were too lazy to write one, and have copied it verbatim from one of the old French chronicles.

I was sensibly affected with the repository made famous by the name of Casimir ; it is a mausoleum not inelegant, and in the highest degree splendid. It contains the heart of the Polish king of that name, and has its place in a chapel, which takes up one end of the cross, and which is dedicated to St. Casimir. You know the story : the monarch abdicated his crown, and retired to France ; Lewis the Fourteenth would not have been wanting to encourage all the kings of the earth to do as much ; he bestowed this abbey, and many other benefices, on the royal refugee. He
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is represented on the tomb, which is of black marble, offering his crown to our Saviour : he is in royal robes, and on his knees. The inscription is pompous and exaggerated ; it makes him king of Sweden as well as Poland, a title to which he had no right ; and commemorates sixteen battles won by his prowess. We know how to laugh at such praise : *sepulchral lies, the boly walls to grace,* have been famous in all times, and will continue a fashion as long as there are pride and money among the descendants. There are trophies, and many figures in bas-relief, on the sides of the monument, but there is nothing in the execution.

Coysevox has left an unlucky object of comparison for this work of an unknown hand ; it is the monument to the memory of an abbot of the monastery, of the illustrious house of Furstemberg in Germany. It stands in a chapel dedicated to St. Margaret, on the opposite side of the cross : this has nothing of the magnificent show of Casimir's, but it is infinitely superior to it in the design as well as execution. There also another in the same chapel that gave me great pleasure ; it is erected to a father and his son, the name Castelan, both soldiers, and both lost in the field : Girardon is the statuary who cut the last : the story is more interesting than that of the former, but I do not think there is at all more of the master in the workmanship. In a chapel behind the choir are a couple of tombs, which gave me pleasure ; there is nothing in the work of them, but they record the virtues of two of our country men, an earl of Angus of the Douglas family, and his grand-son ; they both also perished in the field.

The

The tomb of the eminent St. Germain stands in a chapel near the entrance into the church : there is nothing remarkable about it, unless we will allow the report of the epitaph having been written by Chilperic the Second ; if it was so, the Merovingian kings have been injuriously abused as illiterate.

The sacristy is rich : among the treasures of these places I think it seldom happens that the things most esteemed, appear to me most worthy observation. You will elsewhere meet with accounts enough of the crucifix of solid gold embellished, in properer words say loaded, with gems, and the rest of the pieces of intrinsic value ; what most struck me was a head of Adrian ; it is on an oriental sapphire, an intaglio, and I have hardly seen a more perfect piece of workmanship ; it stands in the centre of a cross. I was strangely pleased also with a picture of about three hundred and fifty years date ; it is of a William abbot of the house, attended by several others, paying their devotions to a dead Christ. The picture does not want its merit, but it is a singularity in it that has so greatly pleased me : in the back ground there is a representation of the principal buildings in Paris at that time, in their situation ; which shews that city vastly disproportioned, even at so late a period, in comparison of the pretended ancient grandeur, to what it is at that time. The abbey of St. Germain's stands in the midst of green fields, the Old Louvre appears in perspective, just as left by Philip Augustus, and some other public buildings remote from the place in which they now make an immediate part. Remains of this kind, when they are,

are, as in this case, assured in point of the date, are vastly more to be depended on than the accounts which we meet with in writers of an after-time, whom different views may render partial, even where they are not misguided by ignorance.

I should have told you, that the library of St. Genevieve is a very considerable one; there are not so few as sixty thousand volumes in it: but that of St. Germain's is much more copious; it is indeed inferior to few things of the kind in Europe. It takes up one entire wing of the cloyster, and there is no room wasted. There are many antiquities of note in it, particularly a small model of the famous Wrestlers in the duke of Tuscany's gallery, and a Jupiter Bernilucius, which are masterly in the highest degree. Among the manuscripts they shew the very Psalter used by Germanus, more than twelve hundred years ago: it is, in its kind, a very curious thing; the title is in gold, the rest in silver letters, upon vellum. If I gave you a detail of all the things that are shewn as curiosities in these places, every letter must be a volume; but I spare you and myself: you hear of all that appear to me to be so.

LET.

LETTER XIV.

I Had never heard of the curiosities in the church of the Celestins. The convent stands near the Port St. Antoine, in a remote and little frequented part of Paris, and strangers seldom hear of it. After all that I have read of Paris, every thing there was new to me: it was by accident I stumbled upon it, and I flatter myself an opportunity of mentioning to you many things as new to you as they are to me.

The Celestins are a royal foundation: before the Val de Gras was erected, the hearts of the royal family used to be deposited here, and people of the first quality buried at it. There are a vast number of splendid and elegant monuments in it: the most considerable of them are in a side chapel on the right of the great altar. The duke of Orleans, who was brother to Charles the Sixth, built this chapel, and it is continued under the name of the family. The father of this youth, for such he was when he erected it, founded the convent: the accident which occasioned this act of piety in the prince was singular and melancholy.

The queen dowager of Philip of Valois gave a public masquerade on occasion of the marriage of one of her maids of honour. The king, her great-grand-son, who had been newly recovered of a lunacy, which had long afflicted him, appeared at the diversion, in the habit of a wild man, attended by five young persons of the first families in the kingdom, in the same dress. Their

habits were made to fit them close in every part, and were of linen, covered with a kind of raw flax in tufts, to imitate hair, and fastened on with pitch : the six figures were fastened to one another. The singularity of their appearance drew the eyes of every body upon them; and the young duke of Orleans examining them, with a wax light in his hand, by some accident the flax of one of their habits took fire, the flame in an instant communicated to the rest, and, as they were fastened to one another, they could not separate nor help themselves. The king was soon known, and the duchess of Barr saved him by covering him with her gown before the flames reached him, but four of the others died of the burning. The king relapsed on the instant into his frenzy, and was never perfectly cured. The duke of Orleans, who had been, though innocently, the occasion of the fatal catastrophe, built this chapel in the Celestins, as an act of some palliation, and ordered perpetual masses to be said in it for the souls of the unhappy victims to his curiosity.

One often sees blood as it were required for blood. The duke fell a little time after, by the hands of assassins, a victim to the jealousy between the royal branches of Orleans and Burgundy, at that time contending for the administration. He was murdered in the Rue Barbette, as he returned one evening with a few attendants from the queen's drawing room. John duke of Burgundy took this assassination upon himself, and he soon after paid dearly for it ; but it has been suspected, and not without a shew of reason, that queen Isabel of Bavaria, wife of Charles the Sixth, was too deeply concerned in it. Valentina of Milan, his duchess, that duchess whose succession afterwards

afterwards caused so many wars, solicited justice against the avowed author of the murder, the duke of Burgundy ; but though the dauphin, the whole body of the clergy, and the parliament were for her ; and though she solicited it with all the earnestness of the widow of the worthiest of mankind, she solicited in vain. The criminal was too high for the sentence which his crime demanded. If the unhappy widow could not obtain justice like a wife, she did what was in her power ; she died like one ; she broke her heart. She lies in the same grave with her husband, in the middle of the chapel which he erected, under a magnificent tomb of black marble, on which are both their figures, in the most beautiful snow white Carrara kind. These lead to the observation of a vast number of other monuments, the greater part of them the best works of the best hands that France has known. I have seen nowhere such a series of exquisite and finished pieces ; the designs are in general fine, and the execution at once spirited and laboured. The epitaphs gave me also great pleasure ; they have too much of that strain of flattery which runs through the French panegyric, but they set the matter of monuments to the dead in a new light to me ; they gave me a kind of succinct history of the French for four or five ages, and stamped it more firmly in my memory than the most elaborate annalist could have done by his writings. Among the more considerable of these, whether for the beauty of the workmanship, or for the elegance or importance of the inscriptions, are that of the duke of Orleans, father to Lewis the Twelfth ; this is the duke of Orleans who claimed the Milanese in right of his grandmother Valentina : his two brothers are also buried with him, Angouleme

Ieme and Vertus, the first ancestor to Francis the First ; with many others of that time, or nearly that.

The hearts of Henry the Second and Catherine de Medicis lie in a pompous and elegant manner ; they are in a gilt urn of exquisite taste, though simple and not covered with a profusion of ornament, supported by the Graces excellently wrought in marble. My heart at once exulted and shuddered in my bosom, as I stood gazing on the urn in which is contained that of the great constable Anne of Montmorenci ; the inscription commemorates his death in the battle of St. Dennis, at the age of eighty, fighting for his religion. No matter that he erred in his opinion, the action and the close of it made me wish he had been an Englishman : his body is at Montmorenci ; the urn which contains his heart is supported by a wreathed column of the composite order, and of excellent workmanship.

An inscription, which I next read, made me blush for my country in another sense. Why must I wish French English, while I am compelled to wish one action of the greatest of our sovereigns French ? It is on the triangular pedestal of a column, on the top of which blazes an urn with the hearts of their Francis the Second and Charles the Ninth ; the inscription tells in a noble and pathetic style, the murder of the dowager to that monarch, Mary queen of Scotland, by her relation queen Elizabeth.

The figures of the Chaliots, Philip and Henry, the first an admiral in the French service, distinguished by many honours, the other duke of

of Rohan, are finely executed; I have seen very few modern sculptures that have excelled them. Near these there stands an obelisk, stately and truly noble; the cardinal virtues are represented in good work at the angles; three dukes of Longueville lie under it, the last fell a youth in the passage of the Rhine in 1672. They were all descended from the famous Dennis, natural son to Charles duke of Orleans: they all inherited the spirit of their father. The male line ended in the last of them.

The remains of the great count de Brisac, Timoleon de Cossé, lie under a column ornamented with bas-reliefs, but there are too many figures; the workman had a better hand than head; the execution is far from blameable, but the design is crowded.

The body of the church has the remains of a great number of illustrious persons; and even the windows of the chapel of Orleans afford matter of attention; they are ornamented with the portraits of the several princes of that illustrious house, from the life, and in the habits of the times.

When I mention the paintings of the windows, I am not to omit to tell you that the altar is decorated with a history piece by Salviati; and it is one of his best. I do not mean by Porta the scholar of the true Salviati, who took his name, but by the Florentine Francisco. I do not know that I have heard your opinion of this painter: we have few of his pieces, at least few acknowledged to be his, in England; though I have always taken some that make a figure, and do honour to greater names, at Houghton, to be his.

You must not understand by this that I set Salviati at the top of his profession. I think he wants the greatest of all the requisites, an elevated genius. When I see a piece excellent in the execution, but mean in the design, I am apt to suspect it as Salviati's, though another name is to it. I do not imagine he wanted faney, he was on the contrary rather too luxuriant in it, but it was not of the great or the majestic turn. The naked figures in this piece have an ease and grace that would have done honour to almost any painter; the draperies about the rest flow with a happy negligence, and are not too cumbersome nor too glaring; the picture is a finished one, and I am apt to believe done in his younger days. In most of his pieces one sees more of the manner of Bardinelli, in this there is a great deal of the style of his first master Sarto: but still there is enough his own to convince, at sight, an accustomed eye, to whom it belonged.

Anthony Peres, secretary to Philip the Second of Spain, and too fortunate a rival to his monarch, lies buried in the cloyster: the princes of Eboli had smiled upon him, and there was no security from Philip's vengeance but in the limits of another kingdom; he fled to France, Henry the Fourth received and honoured him, and he spent his life under his protection.

I have wondered at the story of a marshal of France resigning that high honour for the bearing of the Oriflamme banner: you remember they tell us that Arnold d'Audenchamp resigned his baton as marshal, for it, in the time of Charles the Fifth. The honour of this post is ancient and great;

great ; that is not the only instance that confirms it : they have in the library of this church a history of that prince, their founder, finely illuminated. There is a beautiful miniature in this, representing the king presenting this banner to a figure in armour, who receives it on his knees, and a bishop stands behind the king, throwing in his benediction. If this commemorates some other act of the same kind, it confirms the high light in which it was always received : if it represents the delivering it to this very marshal, it shews the high light in which the honour was held, and countenances the relation of his giving up so great a post to enjoy it. There is another miniature in the same book, of the unction of that king and his queen by the archbishop of Rheims ; this also is very beautifully done.

Do you not stare at such an account as this of a place hardly known to our travellers, perhaps not mentioned by any of them. I was surprized at the omission, but I have thought myself very happy in the accident that carried me to it.

LETTER XV.

I Continue my visits among the churches and churchmen, and you must continue to receive the accounts of them : till I am tired of seeing, I shall not imagine you tired of hearing what I have seen. I have last visited the Great Jacobines, the Dominicans of Rue St. Jaques : they have existed from the time of St. Lewis. They have been honoured with the remains of much royal blood : there are Gothic tombs, many of them full of work, some very awful and majestic, erected to the memory of more than twenty princes of the families of Bourbon, Artois, Eureuse, and Alençon ; the inscriptions over most of them record the deaths of the persons, buried there, in battle, against the Moors, the Flemings, or the English.

I was affected by the tomb of Humbert ; the inscription calls him *amplissimus Humbertus* : what must be the real veneration for religion in that heart, for Humbert was above enthusiasm, which could prefer a cloyster to a crown ? The last dauphin of Viennois made a voluntary grant of his inheritance to Philip of Valois, embraced the rules of St. Dominic, and died in this cloyster. What must be the true piety of that man who prefered a crown in heaven to that of which he was certain on earth ; who prefered to the title of a king that of bishop of Alexandria, *in partibus infidelium* ?

I did not meet with any thing farther in this visit that affected me, and therefore shall not suppose there was any thing which would give you

much

much pleasure, in the description ; but it would be unjust to the French statuaries not to mention some other of their works in the monuments I have seen occasionally in places, which singly did not afford the matter for a letter to you. The monument of a madame de Lamoignou, in the church of St. Giles, in the Quarter of St. Dennis, is, I think, the master-piece of a very masterly statuary, Girardon : I think it is esteemed so ; certainly it excels all I have seen of his. It is an odd circumstance recorded in the inscription, that the body was intended for burial in another place, but the poor of this neighbourhood, to whom she had been a great benefactress, seized upon it by force, and deposited it here.

You have been told of the Caryatides of the Salle des Suisses, in the Old Louvre ; the name of Gongeau was immortalized for cutting of them. But those who have been so lavish in the praise of these pieces, should visit the old church of St. Magloire here ; there is in it a tomb, erected to one Blondeau, by the same hand, and a much more masterly performance in its kind, than those celebrated, and deservedly celebrated pieces.

The Knights Templars, a noble order crushed in a very severe and barbarous manner in France as well as in other places, by the contrivances of Clement the Fifth, and there in particular by the means of his tool, Philip le Bel, have many venerable monuments in a church called, like ours, le Temple. The building covers a great space of ground, and has its privileges of screening debtors, and some other very considerable ones. But the tombs have nothing very singular or striking in them.

Du

Du Cange, author of the Byzantine History, and Housiaye the historian, lie buried at St. Gervais ; the droll Scarron rests also under the same roof : the great chancellor Felliot is also buried th re, and there is a very superb mausoleum erected near his remains ; but I am not greatly struck with any part of the workmanship of it. This is the chancellor who put the great seal to the repeal of the Edict of Nantes ; would it be possible for you to imagine that a part of the inscription, intended in the highest degree to his honour, says that he expressed himself in his dying moments, as parting with his breath with pleasure, because he had done that ; because, in plain words, he had set the seal to the massacre of so many thousand innocent and virtuous families ? What will not enthusiasm effect when it has dotage to work upon ?

. The Jesuits' Church makes a very pompous figure in the journals of our modern travellers ; you will be apt to wonder that it has yet made none in mine. That it is the subject of so much common praise might be a sufficient reason, but there is a much greater, one that, while it justifies my silence on that head, will not excuse it on another. Notwithstanding all that you must have heard of the beauty of its architecture, and the richness of its decorations ; notwithstanding the immense and almost incredible sums that have been expended on it, it is indisputably one of the worst pieces of architecture in Europe. The decorations over the hearts of Lewis the Thirteenth, the late king, and some princes of Conde are indeed splendid to a great degree, and do not want the better recommendation as being works
of

of taste, but they should have been in a fitter place.

St. Catharine's, in the Rue de la Couture, is as old as the reign of Philip Augustus : he built it on occasion of the famous victory of Bouvines, obtained by the courage of the Royal Archers. Two chancellors of France, Peter of Orgemont, and Rene of Biragues, have monuments here, but they are rather works of expence than taste. That of the latter one cannot indeed so fairly judge of, at this time ; its great merit was in the brass work, which was maffy and highly finished, as may be judged by the remains, little as they are : no ravaging Normans destroyed the rest ; the sacrilege has been by the regular canons, and they excuse it by the intent ; the tomb has been stript of all its ornament in this metal, to be converted into a tabernacle over the great altar. The consequence is too obvious to be described. This is a practice too common in religious communities ; and it is no wonder that it has in a great degree stopped the most honourable testimonies which can be paid to the virtues of the dead, by those who had profited of them.

The famous and unfortunate duke of Biron, once ambassador from Henry the Fourth to queen Elizabeth, and afterwards beheaded in the same reign, is buried, but without a tomb, in the parish church of St. Paul, a structure of great antiquity, but of little other claim to attention. Nicot, ambassador to Portugal in the sixteenth century, from whom the famous tobacco plant obtained its name Nicotiana, from his first making it universally known in Europe, has a magnificent tomb in this church : there is also a very fine

fine one over a duke of Noailles : Boileau the critic also lies here ; and Mansard an architect, to whom the French have, though erroneously, attributed the invention of that species of roof called the Mansarde, is also buried here. There are also some monuments of persons little known, decorated with sculptures which do honour to the names of Cosevox and Girardon.

At the convent of the nuns of Ave Maria is the tomb of that duchess of Retz so famous for her literature, who, at the desire of Catherine de Medicis, answered the Polish ambassadors, who came to demand the duke of Anjou for their king, in Latin, and, as it is recorded, in elegant Latin, before the whole assembly. The mother of the heroic prince of Conde, Charlotte de la Tremouille, wife of Henry the Second of Bourleau, lies also here, but there is nothing particular in the monuments.

I was fond of waiting an opportunity of seeing the abbey of St. Victor ; it is only open to strangers three days in a week. It is an ancient building, founded by Lewis the Sixth. The donor of their library, which is a good one, and a public ; Henry de Bouchet, is interred there : as are also Santeuil, the poet, and the famous Lefet, first president of the parliament under Francis the First. This Claude Lefet is the person who managed the famous process for that monarch against the constable of Bourbon. Santeuil has always appeared to me a man of superior genius to many of the French versifiers of more sounding names. I honour him for having gone out of the common road in exerting his talents. The first thing in which he made a figure was not in French but

but Latin poetry. He was a regular, and had talents that would have raised him to greater honours than he ever attained. He was reproached for not having made his way to them ; and when the superior of the house died, was solicited to use his endeavours to succeed him : he attempted, and he failed ; but he said he was in the wrong to have tried. " Those, said he, who " would have come to the gallows, if they had " continued in the world, are most secure of " coming to be superiors here ; we who go on " in the plain way of telling our beads and doing " our duty, have no chance ; we have not time " for the necessary means." Though he did not succeed to the titular honours of his order, he lived in great fame in his life time, and has left memorials that will continue it as long as some of the best buildings in Paris stand. The inscriptions on the fountains of Paris are all his : I do not know whether you have met with that on the Notre Dame bridge ; if not, it will be a pleasure to you to see my opinion confirmed by so elegant a piece of versification.

Sequana cum primum reginæ allabitur urbi
 Tardat præcipites ambitiosus aquas
 Captus amore loci cursum obliviscitur anceps
 Quo fluat & dulces necit in urbe moras.
 Hinc varios implens fluctu subeunte canales.
 Fons fieri gaudet qui modo flumen erat.

No man had been master of a readier wit, or happier severity, than Santeuil in his earlier time of life. Dominic, the famous Harlequin of the Italian theatre, after some strange freedoms that passed at a meeting with Santeuil, on the former's demanding his name, answered, " I am
 " the

" the Santeuil of the Italian theatre." " Faith
 " (replied the priest) if that be the case, I am
 " the Dominic of St. Victor's." He no more
 spared his order than himself. Somebody had
 the ill manners to complain, in his company,
 of having been cheated by a monk: peo-
 ple imagined the absurdity would have been
 repaid with some violent insult; but Santeuil
 looked very grave, and asked him how long
 he had lived in Paris; on the other's answer-
 ing him, many years, Santeuil as gravely told
 him, he was not to be pitied; " The man,
 " said he, who has lived many years in a city
 " where there are so many monks, and is cheat-
 " ed by one of them, deserves it. For the
 " future, sir, concluded he, ever, while you live
 " here, beware of four things, of a woman be-
 " fore, of a mule behind, of a cart side-way,
 " and of a monk every way."

Toward the end of his life he forgot the idle-
 nesses of the beginning of it, and became as emi-
 nent for his piety as for his learning.

Coysevox has decorated the adjoining church
 of St. Pelagie with a very superb and finished
 monument: he was a modern of true taste, and
 this is one of his finest pieces. It is to the me-
 mory of the chancellor Aligre. The families of
 Bignon and Argenson have also splendid monu-
 ments in this quarter, at St. Nicholas du Char-
 donnet. Le Brun also lies here, in a chapel, the
 design of which was his own: this tomb is by
 Coysevox, the others are by Girardon; they ri-
 val each other, it is not easy to say which of them
 is most excellent. Le Brun's monument is not
 all that this church has to commemorate him:

he has erected himself a much nobler in several paintings that embellish it. Here is particularly that excellent piece which recommended him to the favour and protection of queen Anne of Austria, the patroness of his fortunes, whose taste was sufficient to recommend whatever it approved, and whose liberality gave him opportunities of bestowing that time on his pieces afterwards, that was necessary to make them what they were, his recommendation to the whole world.

* * *

L E T T E R XVI.

I Mentioned to you the paintings of Le Brun, his better monuments, in the church where he lies buried : his tomb is properly a monument to Coysevox, who cut it ; his pictures will be an eternal monument to himself. I have been studying them attentively : I do not think them equal to many others which he finished afterwards, and which are to be seen in Paris : but in these there is enough to countenance the favour shewn him by his royal benefactress ; and, in justice, it is more to her honour to have distinguished a rising, than a full grown genius. Shall I give you my sentiments of Le Brun ? The French idolize him ; I have always thought highly of him, but perhaps I am particular in my opinion : I think he is not without his deficiencies and even his faults. My veneration of an artist for his excellencies never shuts my eyes against his imperfections : it is by studying these as well as his beauties, that we form a true idea of his character ;

ter ; it is from the pointing out these as defects in that character that those who would emulate his excellencies have a double lesson from his faults.

You have heard me say that I have thought meanly of his landscapes : the few we have of them in England could give me but an imperfect idea of his talents in this style ; there are many in France, and they all confirm the judgment which they led me to pass upon him on this head. For the rest, I think his genius not only great, but universal : he seems to have had from nature strength of fancy, dignity of conception, and every article necessary to the constituting a master in the history style. I have reverenced Vonette for having given him the rudiments of the art, though I think I can trace, even in his best pieces, mistakes in point of colouring which he seems to have imbibed in that early period, and never to have been able to quit. Seguier, who sent him with a handsome allowance to Rome, to prosecute his studies, and who continued it to him several years, has at once done himself and his country honour by his well placed liberality.

Many of the prime pictures in the church of Notre Dame are by his hand ; they were the first efforts of his pencil, after his return from Rome, and they promise all that followed from it. These recommended him to the noblesse at the same time that his great patroness did every thing to push his fortune ; and the pieces which he left at their several houses soon spread his reputation throughout the kingdom. Colbert heard of him, Colbert, who never once failed of his good offices where real merit claimed them, recommended him

him to the French monarch, who made him his principal painter, ennobled him, and gave him the order of St. Michael.

The pleasure with which I studied the picturss in the church where he is buried, led me, though out of time, and out of the rule and order of my observations, to Versailles. I was impatient to see the greatest works of a master, whose lesser had given me such high satisfaction. I saw the cielings of the gallery and great stair-case; they gave me the highest idea at once of his genius and execution. I saw his five noble pieces of Alexander's battles; their magnificence answers to the subject; they are the most pompous and the most spirited things I have seen: all the world have seen the prints of them, but these, tho' excellent in their kind, are dead and paltry, when compared to the original. The design in these is at once august and judicious; there is a strength of imagination, tempered with judgment, which at once alarms the passions, and convinces the judgment. The expression is strong and delicate; the attitudes are happier than I think in any thing I have seen: and there is a grace and ease in the disposition of the draperies that charms one. While these pieces invite a nearer view, they are formed for bearing it; they improve upon the strictest examination: the painter has studied them so carefully, that they will rise upon the study of those who attend to them with the greatest circumspection; and it is no little part of their praise, that they will please those most, whom it is an honour to please. I think them equal in these respects to any thing I have seen; but while I allow the painter all his praise, let me be as free with his imperfections. There is an harshness in the

colouring that by no means agrees with the delicacy of the design, and to me, who have studied Titian, the light and shadows appear far from happily distributed. I think I can see where this single circumstance would have added infinitely to the spirit of the pieces. It is almost blasphemy to speak thus of Le Brun's Alexander in France, but it will be read in England.

But I did not sit down to give you a history of Le Brun, though I intended my free sense of his merit and of his defects. At St. Etienne du Mont I saw the monuments of Vigenore, Paschal, and Racine, all good ones. I was surprized with the inscription on another, erected to Sueur the painter, in which he is styled the French Raphael. I had seen two or three of Sueur's pieces, but without much either approbation or censure. I could not but enquire, on seeing this pompous character, where I might meet with more of them. Indeed I have been astonished; I do not know that I ever saw such a mixture of greatness and of real glaring faults as in them all. I do not know in what words to speak of a man, who is so unequal, not in his several pieces, but in the same; and that not in one, but in every one. His taste in design is unexceptionable, and this is so very essential, so capital a part of the character of a great painter, that the allowing it is setting him at once very far above mediocrity. Would you believe it, that in every piece of the same man's there is this masterly perfection, and at the same time that every thing is tawdry and jejune in his productions: his draperies are always harsh and stiff, and his naked bodies are imperfect in the disposition of the muscles. He has no great merit in his disposition of lights and shadows: his colouring

colouring is bold, but it is not free; there is too much strength in proportion to the design. The attitudes are always noble, and the expressions in his countenances great.

What shall we say of such a mixture of the elegancies and the defects of painting; he excelled in the greatest and most difficult articles of his profession, and he failed in those which, though not trivial, are less important. He puts me in mind of the character of Demosthenes the orator, superior to all that had been before, or that have followed him, in the great qualifications for his profession, unrivalled in the pathetic and the sublime; and yet low and even contemptible in his merriments, faulty in his descriptions of the manners, confined and steril in his diction; sometimes low, often inelegant, almost always harsh and rough. Do not cry out upon such a character of the greatest orator that ever lived: I, who give it him, allow him to be such. I think Longinus will countenance me in the censures; but with Longinus, let me acknowledge that all the perfect orators of his, or of any other time, are poor and languid in comparison of him; that his divine qualities bury in darkness all his imperfections; that they seem so many precious gifts which he received from heaven; and that, though uncultivated and above ornament, they have rendered him immortal.

When I tell you that I have drawn up this character of the Grecian orator only as a parallel to that of the French painter, you will allow, that, with all his faults, Sueur deserves in some degree the name of this country's Raphael. His great qualities are surprising, and he seems to me to have

despised, as much as the orator, all those little niceties by which such as wanted his fire and genius, were necessitated to court the applause of their cotemporaries.

Scævola, St. Marthe, and Du Chesne, historians of common rank, lie together at St. Severin's; and in the church-yard there is a tomb erected to count Enno of East-Friezland; a family since raised to the rank of princes. At the Mathurins I saw the tombs of Gaguin, author of the Annals of France; of Sacro Bosco, eminent in astronomy. At St. Benoit, lie Sillery the famous chancellor, Perrault the more famous architect, to whose genius the French owe the façade of the Louvre, the observatory, and their edition of Vitruvius; Andrian the engraver, Vaillant the engraver, and many other celebrated names: the monuments are all covered with inscriptions too pompous, but with their foundation in known truths.

At the Carmelite Nuns lies the celebrated Varrillas, an historian whom you know I have always at once honoured and despised; Thucydides has hardly more elegance in his style, but truth and he were no intimate acquaintance. He considered the province of an historian as valuable for furnishing a man with an opportunity of saying fine things; and he would at any time alter his story to give himself the means of telling it with a better grace. He might have remembered that Livy found the way to be sufficiently elegant and spirited, without deviating from the fact.

The church of the monastery of the Val de Grace was founded by Anne of Austria, mother

to Lewis the Fourteenth: the occasion of this act of devotion was the birth of that prince, at a time when she had been married two and twenty years. The edifice is elegant and noble, the cupola is a very grand one, and the high altar decorated at a great expence and with high taste: over the portal is an inscription,

JESU NASCENTI VIRGINIQUE MATRI.

The whole church is, as it were, a mausoleum for the hearts of the princes of the royal blood of France, who have died in this and the last century; among the rest is that of Henrietta-Anne Stuart, daughter to king Charles the First, from whom are descended, by the mothers, the present kings of France and Sardinia, and the prince of Asturias.

You have often heard me mention Girardon the sculptor; I think him one of the greatest among the moderns. I thought greatly of him when I had seen the famous works which I have mentioned; I did not know how high I was to carry my regard for him till I saw the Sorbonne. Richlieu, who restored the decaying house, and made himself in every sense its greatest benefactor, is buried there, and over the vault is a piece of sculpture, from this hand. He is indeed a master; there is a softness and delicacy in his finishing, which most happily sets off the dignity of his design. If the monument be one of the best, the epitaph is one of the worst modern productions I have seen. You have heard me all along censure the French for the extravagance of their praises to the dead, but this is beyond all comparison, it out-gascons Gascony. He is ex-

tolled to the heavens for his virtues, and, among the rest, for his humanity and humility ; does this become the tomb of that man, to whose cruelty and ambition, to whose sometimes wanton cruelty and mad ambition, so many virtuous, so many great, so many illustrious persons fell sacrifices. He had indeed been the patron of the house, and the fathers have well paid him back his favours, if praise could do it. The foundation of this college was by Robert de Sorbon, a canon of the church at Paris and almoner to St. Lewis; it is one of the oldest as well as the most eminent of the Paris university. Robert founded it in 1252, but he left it a mean structure : Richlieu rebuilt it in a taste equal to his own ambition. The church is a structure of great beauty ; the dome is well proportioned, and the four towers stand in an excellent order and true taste : the pillars within are of the Corinthian order, and images of the apostles and angels are placed in the niches between them. The paintings of the dome are good. There are six marble pillars of the Corinthian order, with their bases and chapiters gilt, and a crucifix of white marble, one of the best pieces of workmanship of its kind I have seen.

The tomb which does so much honour to Girardon, is over the vault in which the body lies buried, in the middle of the choir. The cardinal is a fine and truly elegant figure : he is represented feeble, languid, and in a reclining posture ; religion, an elegant sculpture, supports the fainting hero, and the sciences, finely expressed, are weeping at his feet. This is not the only honour done the cardinal by the grateful doctors ; his picture, finely executed, stands at one end of the library, and his bust in brass at the other.

Thuanus lies at the St. André des Acres, and near him his two sons, one of them a martyr to the resentment of Richlieu ; he lost his head at Lyons. The valiant prince of Conti, afterwards king of Poland, lies in the same church.

Philip de Comines, one of the greatest statesmen and historians that ever the French knew, doomed to obscurity in death as well as during his life, lies buried at the Grands Austin's, in a little obscure chapel, rarely opened ; with him his wife and daughter. Lewis the Twelfth, whose interests he espoused with a very uncommon warmth, and on whose account he suffered a great deal in the reign of Charles the Eighth, forgot him in his prosperity ; he lived in poverty and retirement, and died as he had lived. Pibrac, whose eloquence saved him from the vengeance of the Poles, when the duke of Anjou, whom he attended to their country, and who was elected their king, stole away ignominiously, to take possession of the crown of France, upon his brother's death, lies near the great altar : and in the same church the famous Sapin, counsellor of parliament, who, notwithstanding the character of ambassador from Charles the Ninth, was hanged by the huguenot garrison of Orleans, who intercepted him.

At the church of the College des Quatre Nations stands a magnificent tomb of Mazarin ; it is a stately and a fine piece of workmanship ; but it is like a good picture seen in an ill light, it is not placed to the advantage it might be : and to the general observation, the sculptor loses by this accident

cident much of the credit he deserves for the execution.

You will say I have been fond of sepulchral history ; would not any man be as much, who, after reading the stories of our heroes and literati, should fall upon their monuments in the Abbey. There is something of an awful satisfaction in treading upon the pavements that entomb the persons whose names and characters we have been used to read with veneration ; it is like the classic scholar, who had been used to read of the Tiber and the Mincius, who had been used to the names of Virgil and the rest of those immortals celebrated by others, and more celebrated by their own works, visiting the ground where they once trod, and tracing the rivers which murmur in their songs, and gazing upon the little tombs that hold the remains of those whose names have filled the world. But I have done ; if you have but a small spark of that fire of veneration with which I regard the illustrious dead, you have not thought me tedious.

L E T -

LETTER XVII.

THE churches of Paris are not more magnificent than are the palaces ; these and the hotels of the nobility are numerous beyond what any one, who has not been on the spot, can conceive ; it is in these indeed that the grandeur of Paris principally consists. The detail of the whole number were endless ; there are three which eclipse all the rest, the Louvre, the Tuilleries, and Luxemburg ; these there is no passing without some notice, and notwithstanding the many who have wrote accounts of them, I have still seen enough in the first to justify a letter from one who is an enemy to the saying that which has been said before ; and I doubt not of as much matter of new curiosity in regard to the others. The Louvre and Tuilleries belong to the crown, the other is in the possession of the house of Orleans.

The origin of the Louvre is of very early date ; in some old draughts of Paris we see it designed as built by Philip Augustus ; it consisted at that time of several ranges of buildings, sufficiently spacious, and graced in the old Gothic style, and separated at regular distances by towers. There were ten or twelve of these, and they served for different purposes ; one of them was a state prison, it continued so a long time, and was the residence of many illustrious captives and prisoners of state ; Philip Augustus confined in it Ferdinand count of Flanders, taken at the battle of Bovines ; and Philip le Bel sent to it two other earls of that title, Gui Dampierre and Louis le Male. John
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the Fourth, duke of Britany, was sent thither by Philip of Valois; and Charles king of Navarre, by king John, for the murder of Charles of Spain, at that time constable of France. The duke of Alençon also here submitted to the pleasure of Lewis the Eleventh. This sketch of the use that has been made of the towers of the Old Louvre, may give you some idea of its duration. The royal treasury was in another of these towers, and in a third the library. You will smile at a royal library consisting of seven hundred books; but such was this, and it was esteemed a very rich one: printing was not at that time known. This curious collection remained as Charles the Fifth had left it, till it was plundered by the English, and the books carried away under the duke of Bedford's regency.

Lewis the Twelfth began the first alterations in the building. Serlio and Primaticcio had the conduct of the work, and were both masters in architecture; but the advances were slow during this whole reign. In that of his successor, who had taste and magnificence in his disposition, and who had at once improved his knowledge, and given a new fire to his ambition in the work, by his expeditions into Italy; famous as these have rendered the city of Paris, by the plans and designs in its favour, which were laid by that monarch, the French paid very dear for the imported taste; the expeditions under which it had been obtained were fatal to him, and in a great measure to his kingdom.

The last kings of the Valois race were the sons of Catherine de Medicis: whatever may have been the blemishes in the general character of this princess,

princess, she inherited from her ancestors a spirit of patronizing arts and sciences, and she propagated it through her posterity ; she spirited up her husband, and she early inspired her sons with an ambition of making the place of their residence worthy the monarchs of so vast and so flourishing a kingdom. Charles the Ninth concurred most amply of all her sons in this plan, and in his time what is now called the Old Louvre was brought to some degree of perfection.

In the reign of Henry the Fourth there is great reason to believe this and many other works of the same kind would have been highly advanced, but the unfortunate death of that monarch put a stop to all. From this time the successors in the throne have been upon new schemes, and Lewis the Fourteenth, though he hated Paris, yet, at the instigation of M. Colbert, set about a new Louvre, a grand and magnificent piece of architecture, worthy the name of such a monarch. The chevalier Bernini had the direction of the architecture ; and had it been finished according to the original design, it were not too much to say that it would excel all the structures of the known world. There are only two sides of it completed, and, according to the present face of things, there is no great probability of its being carried any farther.

The attention of the world of travellers is so taken up by this new building, that they pay no regard to the old ; give me leave, on the plan of examining what others have neglected, to take some notice of the old one. The guard-room, or Salle des cent Suisses, is a very magnificent room, the proportions are just, and the whole nobly executed ;

executed ; the balcony in this room, supported by four caryatides of admirable workmanship, is supposed, and justly, an excellent piece of work. This hall was built by Catherine de Medicis, as a ball room : no princess ever studied the entertainment of the men of fashion more than this ; she would procure for them rather than they should want avocations of that kind, as is notoriously instanced in the story of mademoiselle L'Amueil, of the illustrious house of Auvergne, who, in consequence of an intrigue into which she led her with the prince of Conde, had a child in her majesty's own palace. She did not desire the people of honour and interest should trouble themselves with affairs of government ; and one of her deep artifices was the leading them off from such thoughts by pleasures. See the upright plan of the present British government, in comparison of this artful and destructive administration. Conscious thrt their conduct will bear the inspection of all eyes, and assured that to be understood will be to be praised, they are not, like the designing Catherine, prompting the people to luxury and dissipation ; but prohibiting the numerous entertainments, as contrary to the genius of a virtuous, destructive of the spirit of an industrious nation.

Romanelli has immortalized himself by some paintings in the Old Louvre : they are in fresco, and are principally in the apartment that belonged to queen Anne of Austria, and in the gallery of Apollo. It was not without reason that Romanelli was the great favourite of his great master. Cortanee had the genius of painting in him enough to see the dawn of it in another ; he saw the principles of it in the young Italian, and he signalized

ed him accordingly, by his favour. They tell me that at Rome I shall see much finer works of his genius ; these in the Louvre were some of his earliest essays, but they shew more than the promises of an exalted genius. The judicious correctness in the design, the noble freedom of the figures, and the graceful ease of the habits, distinguish him at once to the judicious and to the unstudied. Cortanee has the honour of introducing what was at that time called the new style in painting, in opposition to what had been the custom and manner of his predecessors. Romanielli, of all his scholars, was the only one who followed him in this plan ; he perfectly understood him ; he not only copied his manner, but he entered into his reasons, and these pieces are not the only proof of it.

There is a dispute concerning the facade of the New Louvre, who has right to the honour of the design ; it falls between Bernini and Perrault : it is generally given to the latter ; but those who are acquainted with both their characters, and examine the structure without prejudice, will be apt to give it to the former. Perrault may, nay he seems to have done much in it ; but the design has all the face of one of Bernini. Be it as it will, there is nothing in France equal to it in magnificence or in elegance ; the delicate and the grand are so happily combined in it, that it is not possible to say which has the greater share in the whole. The middle consists of two long and open corridors, a peristyle in the ancient Greek taste ; these have a communication by means of a grand pavillion in the centre, which projects considerably, and has in that a noble and bold effect. At each angle there are
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also two other pavillions. The length of this edifice is not less than five hundred and fifty feet, and the coupled pillars and pilasters which range the whole length of it, are of the Corinthian order; they are the most elegant modern pieces of the kind that I have seen, the proportion is exact in them, and they are finished with an accuracy and elegance that pleases and astonishes even those who have not opportunities of entering into their real beauties. I do not know where I have been so much pleased with a piece of architecture as when I first threw my eyes on this. The two uppermost stones of the pediment are each of them fifty-four feet long, and eight broad, and not more than eighteen inches thick: when I recollect the great things that have been said on the raising and erecting the obelisk before St. Peter at Rome, an exploit by which the name of Fontana is immortalized, and the contrivance of which takes up a folio volume in the representation, I think some honour is due to the unknown and unnamed French carpenter who invented and worked the machine for raising those stones to the height of one hundred and thirty-eight feet. They are cut out of the same block in the quarries at Menden, and are placed entire.

A stranger laments the want of a due opening before this façade, but the people of Paris are used to it, and do not regard it, though it robs their city of one of its greatest ornaments; the remedy is easy, and what appears more provoking, is in the power of those who are most naturally interested in the bringing it about; but the Louvre is unfinished, and at present there is no other sign than its continuing so.

A stranger

A stranger in France is naturally surprised at that inordinate effusion of panegyric on the monarchs of the kingdom, and beyond all on the late one, Lewis the Fourteenth. The walls of churches, are full of them, the gates of the town seem erected to give a conspicuous place to them, the innumerable statues are so many more occasions, and the medals struck in commemoration of every event of any degree of importance, in which it was possible to introduce him as concerned, are loaded with them. Men who have genius, have generally with it some candour, some modesty, some regard to decency as well as truth; but it is surprising that these are all in the same strain, they are at once romantic and elegant, at once fulsome and delicate; when one sees the Louvre this is explained: these trophies are not in France as with us, left at large; nor is every fool, who has had a place, at liberty to daub and scandalize the monarch or the patron whom he means to celebrate. Alexander of Greece allowed but one statuary to cut his figure; the Alexander of France established an academy, to whom was to be referred all that was on stone or brads to render him immortal. This academy has an apartment in the Louvre; the room in which they hold their meetings is large and elegant, there are many good paintings in it, and, as they take cognizance of all matters relating to antiquity, there are in it some remains of Greece and Rome of no inconsiderable kind.

You will easily recollect a transcript, but it is a very slovenly, inaccurate, and imperfect one, that Spon gives of an inscription which he saw at Athens, containing the names of the several

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Athenian warriors who had fallen in the field in the defence of the liberties of Greece ; it is at this time in the apartment of this academy : Gui Patin, in his journey to the Levant, purchased and brought it over with him. I spent one hour in contemplating the venerable relique : they are two tables coeval with Cimon and Themistocles, nearly five hundred years older than from the birth of Christ ; they about answer in point of time to the Chronicon Græcum among the Arundelian marbles. The names are divided into tribes, and were probably not done all at the same time, evidently by the differences in the character, not by the same hand.

It gives one at once an idea of the prudence, the gratitude, and the generosity of that people ; they at once perpetuated the fame of those whom they had lost, and inspired others to follow their example. It was a noble pride that dwelt in the bosoms of those people ; there was nothing they would not do to secure a name. The titles of which they were ambitious were those of worthy rather than of great men, in our sense of the word ; the hope of posterity seeing their names on such a stone would do more with them than an immediate bribe with our degenerate sons. No man knew their character better than Xenophon, and he has left them an eternal monument in his description of it to themselves. " You look on labour (says he some where, I well remember the passage) as the only thing that can lead you to a happy life ; but what is a much greater honour to you, what much more becomes you as a warlike people, you are not so sensibly affected with any thing as praise." A crown of parsley could give them as much pleasure as a

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ribbond or a star the present men of eminence ; and their country made themselves great, as well as the individuals happy, while they kept up the spirit of this disinterested glory. The inscription at the top of the first column, which contains a list of those of one tribe, has all the spirit and simplicity of the times. These are the heroes of the Erechthean tribe, who fell in battle in Cyprus, in Egypt, in Phoenicia, in the country of the Halyans, and in Ægina.

The rest of this new part of the Louvre is taken up by a number of academies, established in the late reign for useful purposes ; and by apartments for mechanics of various kinds, employed in the service and at the expence of the crown. There is nothing in the story of the late monarch that will do him so much honour with posterity as this spirit of encouraging the arts ; when his victories are forgotten, or the occasions of his wars are remembered with infamy instead of raising his glory, these will be eternal monuments of a much greater spirit than that of conquering, of improving the world.

I would not be, between you and I, dear * * *, for allowing Lewis the Fourteenth too much neither, on this head ; the effect is evident, and it is a glorious one ; the cause lies perhaps deeper than is imagined. I do not see any thing in the character of Lewis, that would lead a cautious man to believe he had any great love for the arts ; his heart breathed nothing but glory, and that glory was of another kind : ambition was his passion, it was his aim to make a name ; and if he was informed, as Colbert could not but have informed him, that this would tend to his

honour in future times, he would do it, though he paid no respect to any thing but the end, so far as it regarded his own name.

The two Louvres, in effect, make together but one palace, and that, though magnificent in the highest degree in some of its parts, yet very imperfect as a whole. In the only part of the Louvre of Philip Augustus, which is detached from the present Louvre, is preserved the king's wardrobe. Among other things preserved here, are some complete furnitures of tapestry, superior in its kind to any thing that has been executed: some scripture stories and some of the most remarkable passages in profane history are described in these, in a very beautiful manner. There are some done from the designs of Raphael and Julio Romano, and many from those of Le Brun and other late masters. The story of Scipio Africanus, and the history of Joshua, are among the older works, and are very magnificent; these and several others are heightened with gold and silver; but the late manufacture of the Gobelins has excelled all the produce of the former looms. There are at this time some of the pieces of tapestry of that work, preserved for the king's use, that by many degrees excel all that has been done in the world, of the kind.

The Louvre was once enriched with a vast number of excellent pictures and statues, and indeed with every other product of art and genius; but the partiality of Lewis the Fourteenth for Versailles carried the far greater part of them thither; so that the architecture of the edifice is now the principal object of the stranger's attention. I shuddered at the new balcony of this last part of

of it, which faces the Seine, and from which Charles the Ninth, on the massacre of the protestants, diverted himself with shooting at them, as they were swimming over to the St. Germain's side.

This was one of the exploits of that Catherine de Medicis, whose name I have mentioned sometimes before. It was at her solicitation that the monarch gave his consent to that fatal scene, and she obtained it not till midnight. All was prepared to execute it : a marriage of the king of Navarre with the very daughter of this Catharine was the lure to the protestants to trust themselves under the roof of those who were prepared to butcher them ; and the scene of this destruction was laid under the mask of an eternal amity. This king of Navarre, the prince of Conde, and Ambrose Parè his surgeon, were all whom the bloody monarch excepted from the general slaughter ; these he locked up in his closet, for the rest the doom was sealed ; the great bell in the Hotel de Ville gave the signal for the execution, and it was pursued with more than savage fury. But this is not to the purpose : adieu my dear ***

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I 2 L E T -

LETTER XVIII.

YOU have my observations on all that I thought worthy of them in the Louvre; though I do not know whether I should not reckon the Thuilleries, which I intend as the subject of this letter, a part of that palace; it is evidently within the compass taken in by the original plan of the Old Louvre, and it is joined to it by a gallery: but let these be the disquisitions of minuter critics.

The design of this edifice was laid by the famous, or shall I not better say the infamous, Catherine de Medicis, of whom I have so often spoke? The ground was at that time occupied by some tile kilns, but it had been once before the site of a royal edifice. It is apparent from the old plans of Paris, that in the days of Philip Augustus there had been a kind of pleasure house, called le Maison du Bois, on this very spot. Philip del'Orme was the architect to this ambitious princeis, and he has given himself a lasting fame in the structure. His royal mistress had been at a vast expence on the Old Louvre at different times during her life; and it was only a few years before her death that she came into the plan of this magnificent structure. The Thuilleries, if considered as separate from the Louvre, is in itself a very fine and superb palace. The gallery which joins it to that building is a very pompous one, and happily situated; it faces the Seine. The extent of the Thuilleries is more than a thousand feet: it is decorated with four very large square pavillions, ornamented with pillars of the Composite

site order, and has a fifth pavillion with a dome, covered in the middle; under this is the great hall, and the stair-case leading to the apartments. On the one side there are three elegant courts, and on the other are the gardens. Such is the general disposition and form of this famous structure, begun by Catherine de Medicis, but finished by Lewis the Fourteenth, a monarch who has added more to the magnificence of the buildings of his country, than all who went before him. The great thing that does honour to the original architect, is the Ionic order of the ground story: I have seen nothing equal to it. I hear much of the stair-case built by that architect; it is allowed to have been the second excellence of the structure; there are not wanting those who make it the first, but with what justice cannot be now determined. Lewis the Fourteenth pulled it down, and it was necessary to his plan that he should do so, for it obstructed the view to the gardens.

I am sorry to acknowledge that the architect of Lewis has not done himself so much honour as De l'Orme. What that monarch has added gives a vast advantage indeed in a distant view; the front is extended to more than twice its original length, and the building is raised a whole story; but though this has a very fine effect at a distance, it makes but a mean figure near: the eye instantly distinguishes the old work from the new; not by its decay so much as its superior elegance. The Old Thuilleries one sees consisted only of three pavillions and two arrangements of rooms; but the delicacy of the whole architecture shews the additions in a very ill light. Every rule and proportion is observed in the old work;

in the new, on the contrary, every thing is neglected, except shew. The Composite pilasters are at a faulty distance from one another; they stand out out of all proportion; there are breaks in the entablature to give place to the windows; and the Mansarde roof over all gives an air of clumsy heaviness to the whole, that is very distasteful to the nice eye.

The rooms in this palace were once magnificent: the present king resided there in the first years of his minority; but when he removed his court, all was removed with him: the whole is now divided into private apartments.

The people of fashion frequent the gardens of the Thuilleries in an evening, as they do the Park with us. It has been, one cannot well guess how, unless from this single circumstance, a custom to compare the two places; but nothing can be more absurd, for, except in this use that is made of them, there is nothing in which they agree. Andrew le Notre laid the first design of these gardens, and if they had been finished to his plan, they would have rivalled those of Versailles: as it is, they are very elegantly as well as commodiously laid out. It is not easy to recollect a walk that equals the great terras; it is carried quite round, and gives a number of different views of the Seine, the city, and the adjacent country, all extremely pleasant.

There are not wanting here the highest ornaments to a garden: there are several vases and statues of elegant workmanship. Near the basin in particular there are four groupes: the death of Lucrece is one of them; Theadon cut it, and will

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be long honoured for it : **Le** Pontre has succeeded more happily in another, which is of Æneas carrying his father. The rape of Orithya by Boreas is by Flameau ; it is by many accounted the first in merit, but I cannot say it appears to me to deserve that eminence. Renaudin's, which is the fourth, and represents Time preying upon Beauty, is also an elegant one. Besides these there are several copied from the antique, and some very happily ; of this number is the figure of the Nile ; this is from that of the Belvidere at Rome : the principal figure is not the only merit of this piece ; the fourteen boys that stand by to express the number of cubits which the river rises in a good year, are well expressed ; and the figures of the crocodile, the hippopotamus, the ibis, and the lotus, are all finished in an accurate and happy manner. France is the country of the world, which affords the most perfect enjoyment of a fine evening ; and I have seen yet no place in France, where one may enjoy it so agreeably.

LETTER XIX.

TH E women have been, in this kingdom, the designers and founders of the most magnificent buildings ; they have more spirit than the men, and they have another advantage, they do not see so far into the expence. The Thuilleries were the plan of Catherine, the Luxembourg was the work of Mary, another princess of the same illustrious house, the widow of Henry the Fourth. It is the palace of the family of Orleans, and has its name from the ancient Hotel de Luxembourg, on the ruins, or at least in the place of which it stands. It is happily situated ; it stands on an eminence, in that part of the town called the University ; Le Brosse was the architect, the same, it would scarce be believed, who obtained and who deserved so much honour by the fasçade of St. Gervais. The princess began it during her regency, and finished it in that very short interval between the seeming reconciliation with her son, and that wretched exile in which she ended her life. It was begun and finished within the compass of six years : it devolved to Gaston duke of Orleans, her second son, and has continued in the family ever since.

Catherine de Medicis had been some years procuring a vast quantity of the finest blocks of marble that could be had from Italy ; she had deposited these in the abbey of St. Dennis, with intent to erect with them a mausoleum that should exceed all the works of its kind, in honour of her father-in-law, her husband, and her sons. This scheme was never put in execution, and the marble

marble was seized, by a strange violence, by order of Mary, and employed in ornamenting the Luxembourg : some of the chimneys are of this, and they shew the taste as well as the expence with which the whole was got together.

I am sensible that the Luxembourg is esteemed one of the finest buildings in France ; it is indeed one of the largest, but it is heavy ; it is indeed almost the only instance of the rustic that is extant in France : it is said, that this was in imitation of the Ritti palace at Florence, belonging to the family of Medicis.

The palace consists of one large court, at the end of which is the principal building ; this has five pavillions of advanced work, two are at each end, and one in the middle ; one is led to the middle pavilion by a very magnificent terras ; it is of the whole breadth of the court, and paved with marble : in this pavillion, as is usual in buildings of this form, is the great stair-case ; and through it is the passage to the gardens.

The outer building, by which one enters the court, consists of an open gallery, with a pavillion in the middle, covered by a dome, and adorned with pillars and with statues : at the end of each gallery on the right and left there is a large square pavillion, projecting beyond the rest of the front. The court is bounded on both sides by galleries and piazzas, and the back, as well as the forefront of the great building, are adorned with double pilasters. The Tuscan and the Doric are orders of the lower part of the plane front ; the pavillions are elevated above the rest by the Ionic, and over the others are the Attick.

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I was led to a piece, representing the Muses, in the great apartment, and told that it was Guido's, and esteemed one of his finest. I am confident it is either a copy after some celebrated piece of his, now lost, or that it was one of his first in point of time; for it has no claim to any such preference in regard to its merit. I do not know whether indeed a man of tolerable genius, who had studied Guido, and only Guido, might not have come up to as much of his manner as there is in this piece, without having placed any single original of that glorious painter before him. There is, it must be acknowledged, a great deal of the grace of Guido's heads, but there is nothing of their expression. Vandyke is, on the contrary, sufficiently conspicuous in a whole length of Mary of Medicis, in the same apartment. I do not know whether the world have occasion to be pleased or sorry for that evident jealousy of Rubens, who, to prevent his scholar from becoming his rival, or his superior, commended his peculiar happiness in portrait, and by turning his whole bent to this branch of the art, prevented his applying to the nobler part of history. We do not exactly know what we have lost; the genius, the spirit, and the conception which Vandyke shewed in his first pieces in that way, promised indeed as much as could be promised; but we are sure that we obtained by it the greatest portrait painter that ever lived. I acknowledge that Titian excelled him in the single article of colouring; and yet it is not greatly that he has excelled him even in this; for the rest, I must give it in the portrait way to Vandyke. I never look upon his most finished pieces, but I am ready to cry out, as Hamlet does in the remembrance of his father, "I ne'er shall look upon his like again."

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I do not know whether this Mary de Medicis may not be accounted his first piece ; certainly he never finished a picture higher ! we read in this single piece all the strength of Rubens, the colouring of Titian, if a little fainter, yet the same in style and manner ; we see the painter softening the expression of Rubens with all the delicacy which he had studied during his succeeding years in Italy. The manner in this picture is at once noble in the highest degree, and natural and easy in an equal eminence. One would hardly be led to imagine otherwise than by the study of this piece, that portrait painting was capable of such varied excellencies. But the patronage of our Charles the First detained him in England, to leave monuments of his art, if not perfectly equal to this, yet such as countenance all I can say of it.

I have stopped at a single piece of painting in this palace, but it was only to give me breath to go through with the greater and more numerous objects in another part of it, that give one the most exalted ideas of the expression and excellence of the art, although the merit be in the design more than in the execution.

You guess what it is that I am going to mention, and, I can easily conceive, are astonished to hear me speak in this manner of the works of Rubens : I shall explain myself. The great gallery on the right, contains no less than twenty pieces, each ten feet in height. Their subject is the history of the queen ; the several remarkable occurrences of her life are commemorated in them. They are called the works of Rubens, but though

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the painting is good, it is far from that degree of perfection which it would have acquired from such a hand ; the designs are all by Rubens, the whole has been undoubtedly executed under his direction ; and it is easy to trace the touches of his own divine hand in the principal figures and most important parts, but the rest is by inferior pencils.

I had great pleasure in reading so considerable a part of the French history in these living characters, and in observing the allegoric language of the ornaments. No man was ever so perfectly a master of the heathen mythology as Rubens, and he has in these pieces exerted all his powers in it. There is indeed a want of propriety in some of them, which has made me smile ; the painter has been fond of expressing a great deal, a turn of mind very natural to a great genius, and he has drawn his supplies sometimes from sources that are incompatible ; the christian and the heathenish rites are often introduced together. What would you think of the queen's marriage according to the ceremonies of the catholic church, and a Hymen, with his saffron robe and flaming torch, joining the procession, and holding up the queen's train ? I had like to have given great offence by a laugh, which my inquisitive temper could not suppress, at the sight of another, in which Mercury is in company with two Cardinals.

If I pay less regard, in point of the painting, to these pieces, than they do who reverence them as the immediate work of Rubens, there is another circumstance, even in regard to the execution, in which I pay them a greater, and which those

those who overlook (which are all I have heard speak of them) do them but a very imperfect justice. The stories are of the queen's life, and the figures are not thrown in at random, or merely figures to make up the story; they are portraits of the several persons concerned in the events, and are most of them masterly likenesses: Henry the Fourth of France and Margaret of Valois are extremely like, according to all the other pictures which I have seen of them; the duke of Anjou and the prince of Conti have also the same resemblance. I knew by the same means the duke d'Epernon, Francis the Great duke of Tuscany, and Isabel of Austria; they are all great resemblances from the life, or from original pictures, and they make the gallery at once a scene of fine history, and of valuable portrait painting. It is a very pleasing sight to have in view at once the princes and princesses of the blood in France, and most of the cardinals, lords, ladies, and people of rank of the time, preserved in lively portraits, and engaged in actions of consequence.

The most finished of all these pieces, and the most pompous, is that which commemorates the most pompous event of the queen's life, her coronation; in this almost all the figures that appear occasionally in the others, are brought together: one is surprised to see the divorced queen Margaret among them; any one would think this a far-fetched stroke of the painter's, who did not know that it was a real piece of history.

The gardens of this palace are suited to the structure itself: they are large and magnificently laid out, and their situation on high ground gives them

them also a vast advantage; but it has not been of late so much a fashion to walk in them as in the Tuilleries, and they have been kept in less order. I was charmed with them, and spent many hours there.

LETTER XX.

I HAVE but one public building more to describe in Paris: it has a pompous name, and it stands upon a great deal of ground; this gave me considerable expectations, I shall not tell you they were perfectly answered. The earlier name of this edifice was Palais de Cardinal. Richelieu built it, and it is the only edifice remaining to be described of Lewis the Thirteenth's tumultuous reign. The builder of it bequeathed it by will to Lewis the Thirteenth, and from him it descended to Lewis the Fourteenth, who settled it on the duke of Orleans on his marrying his natural daughter.

It is on the same side of the river with the Louvre and the Tuilleries; it is a spacious pile, and will be a lasting memorial, if not of the taste and judgment, at least of the opulence and power of that minister. I do not know indeed, that it is fair to arraign his taste in this particular; the building is remarkably unornamented without, but in a man of his deep design, this might be a master-stroke of policy, not a deficiency of architecture: he was about to build a palace, not a house, and he determined perhaps on this plain front

front to prevent the envy and the reproaches of the nobility : there is so much at least in favour of such a supposition, that when we examine the inside we must acknowledge the plainness without appears affected.

It is a most capacious pile of building, and covers a vast extent of ground ; you will form some idea of its bigness, when I have told you that before the late additions, which are very considerable, were made to it, it conveniently held the whole court during the minority of Lewis the Fourteenth. It consists of several large ranges of building, separated from one another by spacious courts ; the two largest are in the middle.

When I allow some merit in point of architecture to the inner part of this edifice, you are not to suppose, my dear ***, that I mean to describe it to you as an elegant palace ; it is from the plainness of the outside that these in a great measure borrow the contrast that makes them please. In short, this is not the only testimony that the good taste which reigned in the time of Mary de Medici, was extinct in a great measure at the period when it was built. There is a meanness in all the part of it that was of Richelieu's time ; the apartments are low and dark, and there is nothing of that grandeur that might have been expected from so expensive an undertaking. Those who attribute the whole inner disposition to the same principle of modesty with the outer, seem to have paid no great regard to the naval trophies which are placed in so conspicuous a manner in the great inner court, to commemorate the office of high admiral, with which he was vested.

You

You have heard much of the gallery in this edifice, in which are preserved paintings of the several illustrious personages of France, from a very early time. I was surprized not to be shewn it, but on the request I was immediately led to it. When I had cast my eye but in a very cursory manner over a part of it, I applauded instead of blaming those who did not force it upon the sight of strangers. It has a character which nothing can preserve to it but the being unseen. I soon got over the first disappointment however, and after this perused it with vast pleasure: those who would find the same satisfaction in it, must not visit it as a gallery of painting, but of history. I saw in it almost every illustrious name that has graced the French annals from Suger, who was abbot of St. Dennis and regent of France during the absence of Lewis the Seventh, to the late marshal Turenne. The portraits are probably like, because they are copies from the best originals that could be found; but they are executed poorly. I had great pleasure in contemplating the great Chatillon; I almost trembled at the manly form of Dunais the bastard of Orleans, who drove our countrymen out of France, in Charles the Seventh's time. The Pucelle d'Orleans in armour, the great constable Montmorenci, and Tremouille, killed at fourscore in the battle of St. Dennis, all called up, as did many others, remarkable passages of their history, as I looked on their figures.

If I have been free with the building as Richelieu left it, I must be just to it as it is now seen: The late dukes of Orleans have added a new wing; it has been a work of time, but it appears

with a very different face from the old one. The whole chain of rooms in this wing are lofty and noble, and in a vastly more elegant taste than those of the other part; and if the other has a name for the paintings it contains, this deserves one. I have no where yet seen a collection made at once with so much judgment and at so much expence. There is not a master of any degree of eminence, some of whose pieces are not preserved here; of all the capital ones there are many, and they are not of their most trivial pieces, many are of their very finest style.

The apartments are separated from the new gallery by an octagon, in a very noble style, and of excellent taste in every part. In this room I was ravished with a number of the most finished pieces I have seen of Paul Veronese; there are some of Titian's also, that are superior to any thing I have seen. You will be surprized to hear me mention a piece of portrait-painting with warmth in such company, but I had a pleasure in it equal to the highest that I received from the others; it is a piece of Tintoret's; Hercules the Second duke of Ferrara, and his three sons; they are at their devotions. There is also a Charles the First, with his queen and children, by Vandyke; a first rate piece of that excellent hand. Where shall one expect to see two such pieces of portraits together? Among the other valuable pieces, which are very numerous in this room, there are several bought out of our Charles the First's collection, which was dispersed and sold after his death, and a number that relate to the highest subjects.

The new gallery, into which we are led from the octagon salon, is very pompously decorated

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with paintings ; the story is that of the Æneid ; the hand was one of the Coypels ; there is a vast glaring of colour and profusion of ornament, but after the masterly performances in the apartments, it makes but a very mean figure. The French are partial to the artists of their own country, but it would have been more to the credit both of the prince and of the painter, to have had these glaring pieces in a duskier place, some of the invaluable pieces, which lose half their beauty for want of a sufficient light in the apartments, should have been placed in this light and elegant part of the edifice.

The gardens of this palace were intended to be public ones, and they are still left so ; it is singular, that when intended with this view, they were designed so small : they are well laid out, but their want of extent is the more remarkable, as the cardinal was by no means confined in space ; he took in a very considerable piece of waste ground for the edifice, and when he had laid out as much as he thought requisite for his plan, disposed of the rest. It is odd, but there is throughout the whole the same irregular spirit, the same mixture of greatness and littleness : if we look farther, we shall find it also in his life.

LETTER XXI.

If Paris is magnificeht in its public and royal edifices, it is hardly less so in the hotels or palaces of the nobility ; they are very numerous, and they are very magnificent. The Hotel de Sobiez is almost as much worth visiting as one of the royal buildings : the old part of this edifice, which is as old as the time of Charles the Sixth, is of the style of that time, and has a great air of grandeur : Nicolo has ornamented it with some good fresco paintings. The library also is excellent ; Thuanus's Collection was many years since an addition to it. The Palace of Mazarin is as fit for his heirs, in its present ruinous situation, as it was for its original master in all his glory : the difference is not greater between what it is and what it was, than between him and them. I do not know whether you are in the secret, that our lord Pembroke's collection was in a great measure made from the ruins of Mazarin's ; his effects were sold at the same time that the court of this house was transformed into an exchange for the India company, and a very considerable part of them got to that noble lord's. For the rest, there remain only a few maimed statues and busts in the portico, and two or three cielings, too high to be within reach of mischief, of what was once a collection, one of the first in private hands, both in taste and expence, that Europe has seen.

The Hotel de Soissons, an edifice of Catherine de Medicis, is remarkable for a building somewhat resembling our Monument ; it is a column in some degree elegant, and has a wind-

ing stair case : it seems to have been intended as an observatory ; the princess, under whom it was built, had an opinion of judicial astrology, which the more confirms this conjecture.

The duchess of Bourbon's hotel, on the Seine, is singular, and in its kind elegant ; all the advantages of situation conspire to render it agreeable ; it has prospect, water, air, every thing to recommend it ; it faces the Thuilleries, and has a fine opening behind : but with all this it is ill constructed ; its extent is great, its height nothing ; it consists but of one story, and an Attic. It is full of ornament on the outside, but there is little taste in the disposition of it. Within it is magnificent, but there is also a gaudiness that takes off from the grandeur ; the naked rooms would have great dignity, but the profusion of sculpture and gilding disgusts a judicious eye.

The false taste that reigns in this, is too general among the other modern edifices of this kind. The Hotels of Tolouse and Evreux, great in themselves, are rendered little by it. The furniture of the former is incredibly sumptuous : there are many good pictures in both ; in the first, particularly, there is a Guido, almost invaluable ; Leonardo de Vinci had highly finished also a portrait of Lewis the Twelfth there. The late proprietor had the honour to enjoy the post of high admiral of France ; he very nobly furnished a lower room with portraits of those who had been honoured with the same post before him. You know I could be pleased with a collection of this kind, even if badly executed ; but these are by good hands, and copies from the best originals. I sighed at the so much extolled paintings of the gallery ;

gallery ; they are indeed masterly history pieces, but they have been mutilated in a miserable manner, to fit them for the pannels. I have nothing more to say of a house, in which I have been able to produce you such an instance of taste.

LETTER XXII.

I HAVE done with Paris ; tired with the profusions of hotels with which it abounds, and which are too like one another to afford either you in the description, or me in the examination, that variety, which, to confess the weakness of human nature, is in all things so essential to pleasure. I have made my way to Vincennes : this ancient edifice is on the east side of Paris, in the centre of the Bois de Vincennes, a thick forest, in which there are walks much frequented by the people of Paris. Philip Augustus first built a hunting seat in this agreeable spot; this was in 1183. but what he did was trifling, in comparison of what was afterwards added to it. It was enlarged and ornamented from time to time, in the reigns of several successive kings, some of whom made it their residence. For some late ages it had been neglected and gone to decay; so lately as the time of Lewis the Fourteenth it was repaired and beautified: and such is the vicissitude of all things whose fate depends upon the caprice of mankind, at this time, instead of being the favourite seat of monarchs, it is become a prison for state criminals. The building forms an oblong square, with enormous towers, one of which, the Donjon, al-

Iotted for prisoners of the first rank, has a peculiar moat and draw-bridge within the general moat that surrounds the whole. There is all the advantage of situation in Vincennes, but the favourites of monarchs are short lived, and it is not even merit that can continue their better fortune. Vincennes became neglected on the building of St. Germain's, as that did afterwards on the building of Versailles. The gallery, built by Mary de Medicis, has some good paintings, and there are some cielings painted not contemptibly. The most remarkable thing however, is the great gate toward the park ; this is a piece of architecture worth attention ; it is a triumphal arch, ornamented with the Doric order, and has an air of great grandeur and elegance.

I have, since my last letter to you, visited also Nanterre, the birth place of St. Genevieve, the patroness of the Parisians. I was shewn, with great ostentation, the well, with the water of which she cured her blind mother, and restored many others to sight ; but it does not work any miracles now : it is pity, but for so public a good, they would throw the remains of the saint into it ; I dare say they would be as efficacious as her touch was in her life time. The obscure and contradictory histories of the French saints has often led me to doubt whether, setting aside the matter of saintship, there ever were such people. It is reported by some, that this eminent lady, whom they seem to hold in the next degree of reverence to the Virgin Mary, was a shepherdess ; but others assert her to have been daughter to the lord of Nanterre : would not one rationally doubt, from such confusion

confusion in her story, whether she were any body at all.

The monastery of Argenteuil stands a league north of Nanterre, upon another winding of the Seine. This will be immortalized by the loves of Abelard and Eloise; a story unfortunate indeed, but certainly not meriting all that enthusiastic veneration with which it has been treated. It was into this convent of Argenteuil that Eloise threw herself for security before her lover's misfortune; and it was here that she afterwards, on hearing of it, put on the habit. She lived to be prioress here, before she went to the Paraclete. But the history of her administration is not much to her honour; her nuns led so dissolute a life, that they were expelled, by order of a council, and the monastery filled with Benedictines from St. Denys, who have possession of it to this time.

who goes to see her, and not in any other place. St. Germain's is now very fine indeed, and it is a very good house.

L E O T S E R I C H T XXIII.

YOU will expect to hear much of St. Germain's, but, my dear ***, you have heard much concerning it already, and there is nothing I abhor like being tedious and impertinent. I shall pass over a multitude of things in my account, that gave me much pleasure in the view, to avoid this censure from you: I have done it before, and shall in all things else; in the mean time, if there be any thing of which I do not remember to have heard you speak to me, I shall guess it what yourself have not heard spoken of, and be happy in it, as an opportunity of returning something of the obligation I have to you on this head.

St. Germain's is at about the same distance from Paris with Versailles, and it is not easy to conceive what can be a finer situation; the river runs at the bottom of the garden, and there is an immense forest on the opposite side. It has been from very early time a hunting seat for the kings of France; Francis the First founded the new castle, and Henry the Second added greatly to it; but Henry the Fourth and Lewis the Thirteenth did most toward putting it in the present condition: the noble arcades by which the terrace and part of the building are supported, are of their building. The four back pavillions and the new gardens, were added by Lewis the Fourteenth. It was in this palace that our James the Second passed the remainder of his life after the Revolution: great part of it was at that time in a tolerable condition; but since that time scarce any

any of it is fit for the residence of any body. Lewis the Fourteenth was born at St. Germain's, and it was in commemoration of this that he was at the expence of keeping it up, and adding to it ; it is plain that himself never liked it. There is a stone gallery of a very magnificent appearance, carried round the middle of the whole structure. The chapel has a picture of Poussin's, and it is one of his best, for an altar-piece ; the story is the Lord's Supper. There is something singular in the look of this picture ; the figures have all an appearance of antique statues in marble, rather than of flesh and blood : this is doubtless very wrong, but it has something pleasing. More or less of this singularity I have observed runs through all Poussin's pieces : he studied hard at Rome, and he was particularly attached to the statues ; the ideas of their colour, as well as form must have remained with him, for he could not take the very hint of this manner of colouring from any master : for the rest, there is hardly an excellence within the reach of painting of which you do not see some instance, in this single picture. The design is noble, the whole composition accurate and judicious in the highest degree ; the expression at once very strong and very elegant, and the passions of the several figures all are appropriated to the particular person, and all have such a spirit and life, that they declare him a painter of the soul. It is to the honour of France that Poussin was called home : he became famous more than all the strangers of his time at Rome ; and he would have remained there, if Lewis the Thirteenth had not, at the instance of Richlieu, called him away by a most obliging letter. The highest honours were conferred on him, and a great pension allotted him : he undertook,

took, among many other public works, to paint the grand gallery of the Louvre, but the death of the prince who had brought him home shewed that it was not inclination which kept him there. He went back immediately to Rome, in order, as he said, to settle some affairs; but he never returned. The last pieces of many of the masters are the finest, but this is not the case of Poussin; the fame he acquired made it impossible for him to know when he should leave off: he continued painting when, however strong his genius might continue, his hand was unequal to its attempts; there are pieces of his done when he was seventy, in which all the master remains, except the hand, the unsteadiness of which is evident through the whole design.

Marli has been much celebrated, but it hardly deserves the name of a house; it is rather a lodge, by no means proportioned to the extent of the gardens, if taken under any denomination. The gardens are nobly laid out; they have been remarkable for many elegant and sumptuous things, now taken away, particularly for a fountain of silver. The water-works of Versailles are supplied from a reservoir, filled by a mill at Marli, which is a very noble piece of mechanism: nothing surprises the generality of strangers more than the working of this immense machine. It has been offered by a countryman of ours, to supply its place, and answer its purpose much better, by a more simple contrivance, our fire-engine, but though the keeping the Marli engine in repair is a vast expence, the consumption of fuel, which is not at all too plentiful about Paris, was an obstacle which could not be removed: perhaps

haps if a Frenchman should at some future time propose it, it may succeed?

L E T T E R XXIV.

IT is impossible to form a conjecture of what could be the motive of Lewis the Fourteenth for employing the monstrous expence which he has been at, and which from the first he must have been informed was necessary, in order to make a palace and gardens at Versailles, fit for the magnificence of such a monarch. He had choice of good situations, when he fixed upon this, the very worst indisputably that he could have selected; but when he was once determined, it was his character to be immovable: perhaps the difficulty of bringing his designs to bear, was one of his motives; he was always highly flattered when his creatures told him, that foreigners said Versailles was not a building but a creation.

What a choice! to fix upon a place that was an absolute bog, and yet, with all this disadvantage of wet, had a deficiency of water to any purposes, either of use or ornament. The plain on which the house now stands, was an eminence for a windmill; this was levelled, and the earth filled up part of the marsh. But these infringements upon nature's designs are not very lasting: you remember where Canons was erected, in a situation not much better than that of Versailles, though of another kind; the clay of the gardens refused to produce either useful or ornamental herbage,

herbage ; but he who said it should be a garden, thought he had accomplished his intention when he dug away the soil, and threw in better earth into the beds : it has fared with the scheme of the duke of Chandois as with that of Lewis the Fourteenth, and as it will with all who attempt to subdue nature : in a dry summer, at Canons, the clay at the bottom burst into cracks, and the mould all ran into them and was lost ; in the same manner, in a wet season the bog at the bottom grows softer at Versailles, and the harder materials that have been thrown in, sink and are lost ; this is already evident in many places about the grand canal, and will be so in every other part of the original wet and rotten ground.

On such a spot did the grand monarch set on foot a palace, answerable in all other respects to his splendor, and even to his pride ; perhaps answerable also in this, that for one as well as the other, the pompous structure had but a bad foundation : it has indisputably cost him more money than any palace in Europe. It surprises one to see, in the midst of all this pomp and extravagance, the old house standing and making a part of the whole : this was built only as a hunting seat by the monarch's predecessor ; and one hardly knows how to reconcile the frugality of letting it stand, with the enormous expence of what has been added.

In other respects the palace is indeed a great one : the age of Lewis the Fourteenth was one in which, if expence were not spared, there was no fear of all the other requisites of a good building. This is splendid and magnificent in the highest degree : we often see it to a disadvantage ; indeed there

there are but few points of view, in which the eye does justice either to the architecture or the disposition of the ornaments; but in those all appear perfect. When we view the front to the garden, at any distance, it appears too low in proportion to its extent; and when we look into the gardens from the ground story, the groupes and statues appear crowded and confused; but on coming nearer the building, the whole appears truly proportioned; and on viewing the gardens from the gallery, the disposition of those ornaments is perfectly just and regular: if there be any thing faulty in the arrangement, it is not in their place or distance, but in the choice of which shall stand in each spot; the best are some of them too much out of view, and many of the worst (for there are some bad enough) are in full sight. The number of sculptures of one kind or other is immense. I cannot say, that all of those which were pointed out to me as fine, appeared such; but it were injustice on the other hand not to single out some others, which, though generally confounded with the multitude, are in reality as much above, as these are below it. There is a Perseus delivering Andromeda, and a Milo torn by the lion, the work of Puget, in my opinion, the first of the French sculptors, though little known or heard of; probably he has left but few pieces. The last of these, on the first view, brought into my mind the Laocoön of the Vatican; I do not expect to see that groupe much finer: by all the prints of it, this is in the very style. The Pluto and Proserpine of the colonade, by Girardon, are fine; and the Curtius, at the extremity of the basin, by Bernini, is also great and masterly: but these and all the other modern pieces there, are greatly inferior in spirit to the Milo. Those of Apollo's

Apollo's baths, civided into three groupes, are also Girardon's, and they are fine: the two antique Jupiters have also great merit; and there are many others, though in an inferior degree, worth notice.

The fountains of the gardens at Versailles have been one of the most sumptuous ornaments to the palace; but they were too expensive; the regent cut away the pipes that supplied a great number of them; and for the remainder, few are in any degree of perfection. The orangerie, or green-house, is a remain that will long speak the spirit of magnificence that was in Lewis the Fourteenth: it is a very elegant and grand building, flanked with two stair-cases: the basin behind it is one of the finest pieces of water in France; it wants but a cascade at the farther end, to be the greatest thing of its kind in the world.

The inside of the palace is magnificent and superb in an extreme degree, but the ornaments are too crowded; less painting, sculpture, and gilding would have had a better effect; a man of judgment would be for shewing his taste rather than his opulence in such a building, but the contrary is executed here. The French set a high value on Versailles; they esteem it the most finished and elegant edifice in Europe: the gallery indeed deserves all they can say, all they can conceive in its favour; but for the rest, there are things finer of the kind in other parts of the world. The chapel of which they are so proud, is inferior, not only to one, but to many in Italy, by the accounts of those who have compared them. As for the stair-case and the apartments, I think we have those which are equal to them in England.

land. What gave me most pleasure in the viewing of this palace, were the statues and the paintings. The architecture might, and ought to have been better; it is by no means proportioned to the expence; but the French are partial to their countrymen; Italy, though not very famous at that period for its architects, could have furnished those, who would have executed a very different pile from this; and even the materials might have been richer, and got at a very little more expence to the monarch; but there wanted taste equal to the scheme. The paintings are many of them very great, and the statues are in general fine; there are a considerable number of them antiques, and excellent in their several kinds. The Germanicus is a very finished one; the Venus of Arles a very elegant and masterly performance; but nothing pleases the generality of observers so much as the Vestal, at least it is a female figure so called by the French virtuosi; it has a blush in the cheeks, it is said this is a natural tinge in the marble; but if it be so, I do not honour the statuary for the use he has made of it; colour is no part of the business of the sculptor, and had I been in the place of the artist, I should rather have chosen to have thrown it into some part where it might have been confessed as a blemish, than have forced it into the place of a beauty that had no right to be expressed in this art. There is another statue which I should not omit to mention with due respect in this place; it is, at least it is called, a Cincinnatus; it stands in the salon before the chamber of antiques.

The principal passages of the monarch's life are commemorated on the roof of the great gallery, by Le Brun; there is a great deal of ostentation

tation in the manner, and the inscriptions answer to every other part of that vain prince's character; but the execution, in my opinion, does not do much honour to the master.

I have not been used to admire Solvator Rosa so much as it is a fashion to do; we see few of his pieces, beside Landscapes, in England, and of these many that are executed in a masterly manner, are hurt by the unpleasantry of the subjects. I grew more in humour with him than I had before been, from a piece of his at Chiswick; but one ought to see many of a master's works, before one pronounces a judgment upon him. You would think a history piece, with the figures as big as life, a very improbable thing to have come from his pencil; but there is one here, which those who have not seen are in no condition to judge of his genius; the story is Saul and the Witch of Endor. You would not imagine this a subject for great invention, but there are a thousand particulars in it, that surprize and ravish the eye accustomed to admire the beauties of the pencil. The attitude of Saul is great and majestic, while his countenance confesses all the disquiet that reduces the monarch to less than a common man; there is dignity in the Witch, but it is of another kind from that of the monarch, it is enthusiasm and a governed phrenzy; there is a spirit in the whole, and with that spirit a freedom of the pencil, which very few have equalled. I think it is not impossible to trace some of the imitable graces of this picture to their source; there is nothing of his master in any part of the piece: Falconi had merit, but Rosa saw greater merit in his way for imitation; it is seen in many of his pictures, that he has studied the most eminent

ment of his predecessors ; it is seen in this, that he has imitated one of them, and he has not only imitated, but excelled him.

There are one or two more of his pieces that have fallen in my way, between Calais and this place, which had tended to give me a greater idea of him, but it was in this that I read the true, the great master.

LETTER XXV.

YOU will arraign my taste, if I tell you of the pictures of Versailles and am silent about the more valuable curiosities, the effects of art of a sister kind, and of an earlier date. I have no where seen such a collection of medals ; I have no where met with so amazing a series of wrought gems as in the cabinet. The name of Dr. Mead was my passport to Mr. de Boze, the intendant, who did it the honour it deserves, and treated me with an uncommon respect. I have never spent an equal space of time with so much satisfaction, as in looking over the last collection. There is an agate onyx, six inches in diameter, with one of the finest pieces of sculpture on it that I have seen : there are two figures, a male and female, in a chariot drawn by dragons : I called them Ceres and Triptolemus, but the intendant convinced me that they were Germanicus and Agrippina in those characters. The apotheosis of Germanicus is another cameo, in a very great style, but to me inferior to the first. Another that

Struck me extremely is an Alexander, in a very high relief, and in a most consummate taste, on an oriental agate. On a blue agate on a black ground, there is another magnificent cameo; the figures are two, a male and female, and there is a tree between them; there are some Hebrew characters on the rim: it was easy, from this, for those not versed in these studies, to suppose the representation of Adam and Eve, but the characters are modern, the figures antique and fine; they are Jupiter and Minerva. On another stone there are Augustus, Anthony, and Lepidus; and on another, Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Tiberius, and Germanicus; all very finely cut. There are beside these a multitude of fine antiques, and a vast number of moderns.

Of the intaglia kind nothing struck me so much as Michael Angelo's ring; there are no less than thirteen figures on the stone, which is a carnelian, and a fine one; they are all small, but elegant in the highest degree, a most masterly piece of workmanship: Angelo purchased it at a very considerable price; and Lewis the Fourteenth, of his heirs, at a much greater rate. The Cicero is another inestimable intaglia; and the best judges, I am told, say as much of the Julia Damna, wife to Severus; it is on a green stone, the plasma de Smaraldo, or, as our jewellers call it, the prime emerald, but it does not appear to me equal to the others.

St. Cloud does not please me so much as I imagined it would; it is heavy, and though there is an air of grandeur, there wants elegance: there are some very fine apartments in it, and the water-works in the gardens are the finest I have seen,

seen, but not in good order : the best things have been removed from it, so that little remains of the subjects of its former praise. The porcelain manufacture here is a fine one, but inferior to the Dresden. It is indeed more like the new established works of that kind in England than either the oriental or the Dresden ware ; it is more glassy than either of those, but the colour is fine, and the ornaments equal to those of the works of either.

Meudon is as old as Henry the Second, and the mixture of the Gothic and the ancient style in the building has something very pleasing to view, though far from either the character of regular or of elegant. The situation answers to the building ; it is wild, rude, and romantic to a very great degree. The famous quarries of Meudon are here ; they afford a stone better in colour, though not equal in hardness to our Portland kind.

The neighbourhood of Paris affords a multitude of other seats of the royal family, or of the first nobility, but they are not worth attention after these. To confess the truth to you, I find the desire of variety growing very fast upon me : if I was a fortnight ago tired of churches and chapels, I am now as heartily wearied with palaces and hotels : beside, I did not intend to sit down here. If you find I have missed any thing I ought to have seen, or you to have heard of, do not spare to reproach me with it. The corrections of a friend are the most wholesome of all severities.

LETTER XXVI.

YOU will find I have been in motion since I wrote last to you; I am now at Lyons. They stopped me at Nemours, to see one of the greatest curiosities in the world: what would you imagine I was presented with a sight of? the upper jaw bone of St. John the Evangelist; it is preserved in the parish church, and is esteemed an inestimable relique. They told me a long history of the manner in which Lewis the Seventh, from whose bounty they received it, became possessed of it in the Holy Land: I found there had been more than one theft in the conveying it from hand to hand, and I had like to have got into disgrace by an unlucky question, whether those who acknowledged they would steal, might not possibly lie; and so this be the jaw of some damned muzzelman? The fathers produced me a list of miracles that had been wrought by it; and who, after such conviction, would doubt its authenticity?

The Roman town which Cæsar mentions by the name of Grex, stood on the very spot that is now covered by Nemours; the remains of the Roman buildings have very lately been found there. Nemours stands on the Loire; the next town, Montagies, by means of the canal of Briare, has a communication both with the Loire and the Seine. There is a castle here of very ancient structure, it was built by Charles the Fifth; on one of the chimneys in this building there is a remarkable piece of sculpture, it represents a battle between an unarmed man and a mastiff, before a multitude

multitude of spectators. The story is preserved in record, but the names are lost ; it is as old as the time of Charles the Fifth ; the conflict was on the eighth of October, in the year 1371.

A person of some distinction was found, early in the morning, by some peasants, dead, in the midst of an un frequented wood, and with marks of violence on him ; by his side stood a mastiff dog, that used to attend him in his walks. The monarch was on the spot when the accident happened ; he enquired with the utmost rigour after all that could be supposed guilty. An ancient animosity between the deceased and a man of fortune in the neighbourhood had rendered him suspected : his servants had sworn to his being in bed early ; himself gave asseverations of his having made up the dispute ; but the king suspected. Charles the Fifth was a man of discernment, he thought guilt was in the face, in spite of all the asseverations of innocence : he ordered the suspected person and twenty others to be set before him the next day ; he produced the faithful dog, that had been found near his master's body ; the creature singled out the murderer, who was the very person suspected, and would have torn him to pieces on the spot, if he had not confessed the fact, and changed the punishment.

I have hardly seen a town better situated than La Charite ; it is on the side of a fine hill, and at its foot has the Loire, with a very handsome stone bridge over it. It is the half-way town from Paris to this place. There is a priory in it, the ecclesiastics of which were once so benevolent to strangers as to obtain the place its name of La Charite ; but that spirit is now lost. The church belonging

belonging to the order is now standing, and has some remains of grandeur and even of elegance; but it is in ruins.

I was greatly pleased with the figures of some animals in mosaic work, in the choir; they are well executed, and make at once a pretty and a singular appearance. The town has a manufacture of glass, and has a considerable trade in it at present: it has been a scene of much devastation in earlier times, on different occasions; the Vandals burnt it in king Pepin's time, the Huguenots in Charles the Ninth's.

Where is it that the progress of the Roman arms is not to be marked? At Nevers there are remains of the building in which Cæsar, in his Gallic expedition, laid up magazines of every kind for his armies: it is palpably the Noviadunum in Æduis. It is at this time a place of some consequence; it is fortified with strong walls and towers, and surrounded with a deep ditch; it has a stone bridge of twenty arches over the Loire; the cathedral is ancient, and there are some laboured, though not elegant sculptures, on its outside. The Jesuits have also a college here, a handsome structure: and the palace of the dukes of this name is no contemptible building; the front is extensive, and the gardens, if not magnificent, are pleasant. The glass trade flourishes in this town also, and brings considerable riches to it. It is an odd mark of distinction that is allowed the treasurer of the church of Nevers; he is allowed to officiate in the choir booted and spurred, with his sword on, and a hawk upon his wrist; the last is esteemed a more singular mark of honour than all the rest, and the person

son possessed of the office always takes care to keep up the privilege.

To turn one's back upon Moulins, as one approaches it from Nevers, is to have one of the finest prospects in that city and its environs, that the eye can be well entertained with: to look forward, is to have also a very agreeable one. Moulins, which itself is also a considerable city, has its situation in a beautiful plain; it has at all times been of some note, but the additions and improvements made of late in it have rendered it one of the handsomest in France. The town itself is well built, the suburbs are large, the castle, which was long the residence of the eldest branch of the house of Bourbon, is a venerable building, and is yet in tolerable repair. The unfortunate duke of Montmorenci is buried here in a chapel erected by his duchess; the tomb is pompous rather than elegant, a thing of more expence than taste. The duke fell a sacrifice to the resentment of Richlieu. There is a sulphureous water in this town, much esteemed in the same cases as those of the Bath with us.

Roanne owes its flourishing state to its situation; the navigable river that comes up to it renders it a place of traffick. It is the magazine of many of the manufactures of Lyons, and is a mart also for great quantities brought from the west of France: the merchants are its principal inhabitants, but they have houses in great taste. The Jesuits have also a college here, and the churches of the Capuchins and Minims deserve notice.

Taran is remarkable for a very disagreeable piece of road in its neighbourhood: a mountain,

not less than three miles in length, and difficult to pass ; the way to the town is through a thick wood, and the road rough and disagreeable.

Thus, my dear ***, you have my route to Lyons, and all that appeared to me worth seeing in it. I had intended to write of the place itself in this letter, but the preface has left no room for the history.

LETTER XXVII.

LYONS, concerning which I intended to have said a great deal in my last letter, is very happily situated ; it stands just at a confluence of the Rhone and the Soane, the latter of which runs through the middle of it in such a manner as to divide it as it were into two towns. It takes up the declivities of two hills, and the level ground between them to the river. It is a large, a rich, and an elegant city ; it stands in the middle of Europe, and is one of the most flourishing of France in point of commerce ; all things considered, it must be allowed the second city in the kingdom. The rivers have given occasion to four bridges, all of them good buildings in their kind ; but these are things you may hear from all that have travelled, you may read in all that have travelled, you make me too punctual when you expect of me to give ever so cursory an account of every thing that I meet with ; it is against the plan on which I set out, and I will not indulge your curiosity any longer. I have

I have neglected the common subjects of observation to consider a very remarkable piece of antiquity, which I have found preserved here: it is like to nothing I have seen; it commemo rates a custom few have heard of; it is an altar, decorated with figures, and explained by inscriptions, the emblems else were unintelligible. This to me extremely curious piece of antiquity, was dug up within the limits of the city in which it now is prefered, in the year 1704. it is an altar of stone, regularly fashioned; the inscription commemorates the occasion of the sacrifice performed on it; the figures, the nature of it; the words are, PRO SALVTE IMP. CÆS. TIT. ÆLII HADRIANI ANT. AVG. PII PAT. PATRIÆ LIBERORVMQVE EIVS ET STATVS COLONIÆ LVGDVNENSIS.

In the middle of the inscription is a bull's head ornamented with a string of pearls, the ends of which are seen hanging behind his ears; on one side of the stone there is a ram's head, decorated with the same kind of bracelet as the bull's; and on the other, the sacratum venabulum, an instrument of a middle kind between a sword and knife, known by those who are conversant in antiquities to have been used at that time in sacrifices: the ram's head has no inscription, but on the same side with the knife stands, CVIVS MESSONYCTIVM FACTUM EST V. IDAS DECEMBRIS.

It is clear, from the head of the bull and that of the ram, that the altar was used at the sacrifice which they called in the one case a taurobole and at the other a criobole; the taurobole, however, as the most august and solemn, became the

the universal name. It was customary for the principal cities and provinces to perform these sacrifices for the health and prosperity of the emperor; the taurobole in particular had its origin just after the institution of christianity, and was probably in its foundation meant as a ridicule upon the baptism of our religion: be it as it will, the solemnity, if it may be called by that name, was more odious and horrible to the eye than any thing that ever was countenanced under the name of religion; it was a kind of baptism in blood, and was originally instituted to the Cybele Magna Mater; it continued to the very end of the pagan superstition. I remember to have seen an account of them, with all the particulars, in Firmicus Maternus: the method, so far as I recollect, was this.

A pit of ten feet deep, and of six in diameter, and a little more in length, was dug in an exposed spot of ground, generally on a little eminence; the priest, dressed in vast pomp and ornamented with a crown of gold, was let down into this hole; the mouth of it was then covered with boards, pierced full of large holes, and placed at some little distance one from the other; at the upper end was placed the altar: and when all was thus prepared, the bull, a full grown and robust one, dressed up with garlands and other ornaments, with his forehead gilt, was led to the sacred stone; the sacrum venabulum, or instrument of death, was plunged into his heart, and the blood, which issued in a torrent through the large wound, ran down in showers upon the priest through the crevices and holes in the boards; the victim was detained upon the place so long as it would bleed; and it was the busines of the enthusiast

thusiast below all the time to place himself in the way of the fullest torrents of the blood ; he first took care to get his robes thoroughly stained from top to bottom with it, a fresh stream was then received upon the crown, his open hands caught a quantity, which they spread over his legs ; and finally he turned up his face toward the last runnings in such a manner as not only to tinge his skin thoroughly with it, but to get more or less of it into his mouth, his ears, his nose, and his eyes. The ceremony was performed at midnight amidst a blaze of torches. When the blood no longer flowed, the victim was drawn off, the boards were taken away, and the priest, now become high-priest, was taken up by the attendant priests with as much adoration as is paid to the new-made pope. The crowd who attended adored the horrible spectacle, and he was conducted home with the triumph of a conqueror. Would one imagine human nature could devise such a ceremony ; would a man conceive it could be adopted by religion ! It was, during all the time in which it continued in use, esteemed the most awful of all solemnities, and seemed to be held sacred in proportion as it was nasty.

in the colony is still about the same to this day; & the
L E T T E R X X V I I .

WHEN I mentioned a remain of antiquity at Lyons, I should not have omitted another, which I was first shewn as the greater curiosity; it is a speech of Claudius in the senate, made in favour of the people of Lyons, recommending them as worthy to be made a Roman colony, and admitted into the senate. Claudius, you know, was a native of Lyons; it is not a wonder that he should wish to ennable the place of his birth, though he cared nothing for it in any other sense; Lewis the Fourteenth added buildings of a vast expence to the palace in which he was born, though he scarce ever saw, or wished to see it afterwards. The speech of Claudius made on this occasion is engraved on a table of brass, and preserved with great veneration in the town house.

Among the modern works that deserve attention, I cannot but mention the great square, the Place de Louis le Grand, and the statue in the centre of it: the houses are elegant and pompously ornamented on the front; the square is extensive, and the walks, into which it is laid out, pleasant; the statue is an equestrian one of Lewis the Fourteenth; the pedestal is of white marble, the statue itself of copper, and if it do not deserve the highest encomiums, is far from a bad one.

The cathedral does not stand well, it is in the lower part of the town near the Soane. I was vastly pleased with it; it is indisputably one of the best

best structures of its time, and, though the plainest I have seen of the period, has a grace in its simplicity that all the rest want in their copious ornaments. There is a square before it, and in that a fountain; the front is seen to great advantage by means of this space. The canons of this church are counts by office; and there is something particular in the service, it is performed all without book, in Gregorian song, and without organ. The Dominicans and Jesuits churches are not without their beauty; that of the Franciscans claims attention on another score, there are good pictures in it; I must not be understood to mean this of all that are preserved there, some are bad enough.

I know you will expect a long harangue on the famous clock; you will be surprized to hear it has not answered my expectations. Celebrated as it has been, I am very well convinced it would by no means answer yours. There is some machinery in it, and for the time it was made (Lipicius of Basil invented it) it had merit, but our musical clocks and microcosms, are infinitely superior to it in all respects. Children stare at the savages of St. Dunstan's, and believe me they are only children of a larger growth who gaze with rapture upon this. I waited for the best time of seeing it, which is noon; the figures all perform their motions at twelve o'clock; at this hour an angel opens a little door to discover the solemnity; you see within a figure of the Virgin Mary; while your eye is on the object, the figure of the Deity descends to her, and on this a brazen cock crows at the top: there are beside these some movements respecting the celestial bodies. You may guess at the whole from the specimen.

There is something singular in the whole appearance of this town, the corners of the streets, and a number of the other of the more public places, have images of the Virgin Mary and our Saviour ; some of these are well executed and are a great ornament to the city, some bad enough. The better houses are many of them elegant, but the windows of the others have a most disgusting look ; they are not of glass but oiled paper : the trades-people will not allow that this is done out of frugality, they say, it keeps the sun's heat better out of the house ; they are often torn and tattered, and are a most nasty sight.

In many of our country towns we have a May-pole, in Lyons there are an hundred ; a strait tall fir, naked to the top, where there are left on it a few dead branches, is erected before the door of every magistrate ; the arms of the family are hung up about the mid-height : you distinguish the houses of the magistrates, the hotels of the intendant, and the archbishop's palace from the other buildings by this signal ; but it has a strange, gaudy, and uncouth look.

The town-house is the most magnificent and the most regular building of the kind that I have seen ; it is a quadrangle of white stone, and stands in a square ; the front is flanked with two large square pavillions, and has a gilt balcony supported by two columns of porphyry of the Ionic order ; and the principal entrance is embellished with ranges of fine pillars, which make a noble portico. The busts of several of the French kings are placed in this portico ; but they are not worth attention : the speech of Claudius on the brass tables,

tables, faces you as you go up a few steps: the stair-case is magnificent, and not ill painted; the hall spacious and august; and both here and in other parts of the building there are many good-paintings.

You must not wonder that a place so favoured in the Roman times, retains many monuments of the grandeur of that people: the aquæducts out of the gate of St. Just are noble, they are built entirely of square stone; and the Vineyard of the Ursuline nuns is the reservoir, made to preserve the water of these aquæducts; it is forty-five feet long, very nearly as broad, and the wall is three feet thick. It is not long since there was dug up, near the gate of Vene, a mausoleum supported on four columns, in the manner of an altar; it seems to have been the monument of some of the Roman priests, but there is no inscription.

In the isle of St. Barbe there are several considerable ruins; I saw some bass-reliefs in a very good taste, one of them has a Bacchus, a Pan, a Sylvan, and a Faunus, all good: another has the seasons expressed in a very masterly manner: they occasionally discover also Mosaic pavements in digging. You have read enough of the causeways made in Gaul at the command of Agrippa; there is a very considerable fragment of one of these out at St. George's gate; this artificial road lies twelve feet deep in the ground; it is composed of small flints cemented together in an amazing manner, the very cement is as hard as marble; it is plain by the direction of this fragment, that the road led from Lyons to Narbonne.

The

The Tombeau des amans, once preserved near one of the gates of Lyons, and supposed to commemorate the deaths of two lovers, who, after a long separation, met there, and died with the surprize and joy in one another's arms, has given occasion to a very pretty novel in the Astrea ; but there was no foundation in fact for the story, the whole was no more than a blunder about an old Roman inscription.

We read of public spectacles exhibited to the people at Lyons, so early as by Caligula : Claudius is also said to have built an amphitheatre there ; it is probable that he repaired and beautified it, but the thing must have been of earlier date : the vestiges of it are yet to be seen ; the arena, some of the seats, and the caves in which they kept the wild beasts, are to be easily discovered.

The Jesuits have a grand collection here ; their medals are numerous, and many of them good ; they have a head of Memnon in basaltes or black marble, an invaluable piece of antiquity ; it was sent some time since from Egypt, where it was found among the mummies ; it is supposed by the present possessors to be older than the decalogue. They have a number of figures also of all the Egyptian deities. At the Hotel de Cheverir there is a representation of the god Mithra, worshipped with a peculiar devotion in this city ; it is a serpent, the inscription, SOLI INVICTO. M. L E T.

LETTER XXIX.

THEY made me smile, as I talked of quitting Lyons, with the name of the post-afes of St. Sapherin; they tell me they perform their stages as well as horses, but that no art or force can get them to stir an inch farther. I remember to have seen an instance of this kind of sagacity in that animal in England; somewhere on the north road there is a deep well, from which the water is drawn up by an af, who moves round the mouth of it; the creature knows the number of rounds necessary to bring the pail within reach, he goes these chearfully and without stop, but no beating will make him pursue his course a step farther. I only heard of these new fashioned animals. I write to you from Avignon, whither I came by water: the Rhone is very rapid, but we fell down it in the Lyons boat with vast pleasure. You will think M—'s dead; the plural We in the last sentence is, I think, almost the only intimation you have had this month of his existence. We are always together, but he has little relish for the subjects which take up my attention; and to confess a truth, which I am a good deal ashamed of, I have not so much as I wish I had for those of his; but you shall have more to remember him by. I left him, at his own request, a few moments behind me, as he landed; he followed me in, attended by a fellow, whom he had hired to go into the river, with a vast bundle of wet weeds. It is not of the number of Mr. M—'s failings to be careful about trifles; the fellow threw down his load where he pointed, which was on the top

of our portmanteau ; it was in vain I exclaimed, no attention was paid till the porter had his reward ; and then what I was saying had no more regard than before : M—s was too full of talk to have the sense of hearing ; he catched up a piece of the stalk, and shewed me one of the most surprizing incidents, as he termed it, in nature. I had no more eyes for the curiosity than he for the contents of the portmanteau ; we talked at cross purposes till I was reduced to take up the weeds myself ; and while he was pointing out to me the occasion of his bringing them in, to point to him the miserable condition in which the water, which had trickled from them into the half-open portmanteau, had left our baggage.

When the mischief was stopped, I listened to his entreaties, that I would look upon the plant, and there certainly appeared in it something singular enough ; the whole consisted of a small root with a few long leaves rising from it, and in the midst of them a stalk of two or three feet in length, but so weak that it was by no means able to support itself erect ; and what was more strange this stalk was not strait, but twisted in a spiral form, in the manner of a cork-screw, or rather in the manner of those springs of wire which we see made by wrapping the wire round a small stick : the singularity of the thing struck me, but we pay but a half tribute in our applause to the works of nature, when we have not examined them perfectly, or been informed of their uses. It is the purpose of nature, that every part of this plant shall be immersed in water, except the flower, one of these stood at the top of each stalk, large, long, and in some degree resembling a single flower from a bunch of jessamine ; it is to the pur-

pose of nature that this be always dry, and the heat of the sun is requisite to the opening the seeds contained in a cup at the base of it; and it is as necessary to the well being of the plant that the rest of it be under water. The Rhone is a river of very uncertain depth, and that in places very near one another; if the seeds of this plant, or the side-shoots from the root produce new ones at different depths, how is the flower to be carried to the top, and only just to the top of the water in each? The Rhone is, of all rivers, also the most apt to be swelled by sudden floods; in this case how is the plant that was just flowering in its proper manner, at four feet depth, to be kept in the necessary state of having that flower above water, when the depth is increased to six? or how is it to be kept from falling on the surface of the water, and rotting, when the depth decreases, and leaves a foot or two of a naked stalk, alone unable to support itself? All these purposes are answered by the spiral form of the stalk. Nature has given it in this a power of extending and contracting itself in length, and this so suddenly, that let the rise or fall of the water be ever so quick, the lengthening or shortening of the stalk accompanies it; and the same mechanism suits it in a yet easier manner to different depths; we pulled out the stalk with great ease to a foot more than its common length, without any danger of breaking it; and it drew back to its original length with perfect facility. By this mechanism, the like of which is not seen in any other plant in nature, the flower of the vallisneria, for so my companion called this singular vegetable I (suppose from the name of the Italian naturalist) is preserved at the surface, be the depth what it will, or the changes in depth ever so sudden. By this

means the sun does its part in the ripening the fruit, till the seeds are scattered on the surface of water in perfect ripeness; they float a little while on the surface, but when thoroughly wetted they sink, and take root at the bottom. My companion was charmed to see me pleased with the observation; to confirm me more in the truth of it, he ordered a large vessel of water to be brought into the room: he put some of the most vigorous plants into it, some of them with stalks so long that one half of them was above the surface of the water; others with them so short, that they were immersed several inches under it; he told me we were not to expect the change so sudden as if they were in their place of growth; but when we examined them next morning, they had all adapted the length of their stalks to the depth, and the flower of every one was floating just on the surface. In searching after one thing the naturalist often finds another; something very singular occurred in this observation, beyond the immediate object of it. But I am called upon. I shall not have time to go through the other part of my story, and it will be better to reserve it for another letter.

LET.

L E T T E R XXX.

I told you we made a very unexpected discovery in the farther observation of the singular plant, which M—s had brought in with him : how natural it is to interest ourselves in what we like ; yet I have some right to be admitted into that plural, from the pleasure I found in the observation.

While I was pleasing myself with the beauty of the inner part of one of the flowers, which was now perfectly open, my inquisitive friend saw something in motion about the root ; he ordered a fresh vessel of water, cut off the stalk of the plant, and throwing the rest of it into this smaller vessel, kept his eye, and called upon me to fix mine on the part where he had before discovered some unexpected perturbation ; he directed my sight down to the base of every leaf, and just in the angle made at its rise, pointed to me a lump of a blue jelly. You are to know, says he, my dear scholar, that nature has made no part of her works without an intent of its being serviceable to some other. You have admired this plant, and you will have something else to admire, or I am much mistaken, which you could not have seen but for this plant. You will easily discern, continued he, that all this water is full of living inhabitants ; they have in a great measure dropped from one or other part of the plant, many of them rest on it only at their pleasure, but to others it is necessary ; the more robust kinds of these little creatures rove about the wide expanse at pleasure, and are in their several degrees and

different magnitudes food to one another; these only rest on the stalks of this, or indifferently of any other plant: but there are others of too delicate a frame to suffer the rude motions of the water, when agitated by storms, or hurt by the rapidity of such a current; these find in one or other peculiar and appropriated plants, a lodgment in one or other of their parts, or natural cavities. There is indeed scarce any of these natural cavities in any vegetable, whether of the salt or fresh water, that is not inhabited; the very bodies of larger animals afford place for smaller; the holes and cells in the larger sea-shells are possessed by certain kinds of sea-worms and other creatures of delicate texture; and the corals, are as full of animals as of caverns fitted to receive them, and have been by a number of the half-philosophers of a late age, and by some of those whose names are celebrated in the present, supposed the very work or mechanism of these insects, and denied a place among the vegetable world. The count Marsigli began the errors about these beauties of the vegetable creation, but in a contrary extreme; he mistook the insects, which he saw in their cavities, for their flowers, and thence argued on a new principle for their being plants: on the contrary, those who espoused the doctrine of their being the work of animals, discovered long since his error, and made what he urged as a proof of his own, a collateral evidence at least of their system: the animals were indisputably such, and the next step to the finding them in the plants, was the supposing them to be the fabricators of those bodies. Such are the extremes into which people, too hasty in judging, and too remiss in observation, fall on the one side as well as on the other; the truth is in neither extreme, and they

hey never think of seeking for it in the middle : though the corals are not made by animals, yet animals live in their cavities ; and though these are not their flowers, yet they have flowers and also seeds which vegetate on the bottom of the ocean, as those of the ordinary ranks of plants do on the earth, and in the same manner produce their kinds.

The valisneria have no cavities on its stalks or branches, for the reception of insects ; but there is a safe and deep hollow at the base of every leaf, and in this there lives in the usual way an animal. These were the lumps of jelly which M—'s had observed in the course of his former enquiry concerning the use of the spiral form of the stalk. We now were tracing their forms at a smaller distance, and we saw them in a very eminent degree worthy our attention. My philosopher assures me the creature is hitherto unknown to the world, you will therefore excuse me of tediousness, if the joint considerations of its novelty, and the singularity of its form, make me particular in the description.

After many changes of situation, in which we had seen these creatures tolerably well, though not with all that precision we could have wished, we cut off the plant just by the root, and, after fixing it by the cut end, by the help of a piece of pitch, to the middle of a shallow vessel of white earthen ware, we cut off all the leaves near their base, and then added water to about half an inch over the tops. In this position all was exposed to view : we placed the vessel in a window, where the full sun shone upon it, and keeping our eyes steadily on the creatures, soon became

thoroughly acquainted with their form and cœconomy.

There was one of these insects in each of the hollows, and, while in a state of rest, the appearance of all was perfectly alike, each seemed a lump of blueish gelatinous matter, rising into a convexity in the middle, but with no other determinate form: when the disturbance of pouring the water, and moving the vessel was over, the sun warmed the creatures into new life, and we saw them all in motion.

The first change in their form was the appearance of a little opening on the top of each; it was very difficult to see how this was brought about, but it seemed owing to a general retraction of the parts around. Soon after this, a kind of pyramid began to shew its summit in the centre of the hole, this was of a fine red colour; it enlarged and thrust itself farther up by degrees, till at length it more than equalled the whole bulk of the body in its other state, and the gelatinous matter seemed to diminish in quantity by degrees as this heightened, till at the end this pyramid was all that appeared in the place of the whole. While we were admiring this change of appearance, a much stranger offered itself: we saw the smooth surface by degrees rise into ribs and ridges; we saw these elevate themselves higher and higher; we saw a fresh opening at the summit of the body, which before terminated in a sharp point; and we saw the several ribs in motion. It was not long before we found these were not risings of a continued surface, but separate and detached;

detached ; they opened, they separated from one another ; the aperture at the top grew larger ; and although they all separated, and falling down every way like so many rays from a centre, they formed a flat and very beautiful orbicular figure. In this new appearance, so perfectly distinct from all the others, each animal appeared again alike : and I think I never saw any thing more beautiful. Each was now about a third of an inch in diameter, and the arms, which were quite separate, were all in motion ; they had a great variety of beautiful colouring, and as they played about in the sun-shine appeared to have yet more ; the strongest tints were of purple, yellow, and blue, all very lively ; but the shades of these intermingling with one another in the continual quivering motion formed an inexpressible variety : in the centre of the body was a very large aperture, in form of a crescent, which the creature frequently opened and closed again, during the vibration of the arms ; this, though vastly disproportioned in size, seemed to me to be a mouth, but my instructor soon after found means to shew me that it was only the opening into a kind of case, or hollow, into which the creature received, and in which it detained the animals it was about to prey upon, and in the centre of which was the real mouth, much better proportioned to the size of the animal.

We had not long observed the creatures in this new form, which represented them more, if not for their motion, rather as flowers of the plant than as any thing of the animal kind ; when one of them that had been more violent in its motions than all the rest, extended itself beyond the limits of its cell, crept absolutely out of it, and remained.

remained only fixed to its bottom by a thin and transparent filament which formed a kind of tail to it; in this condition it again assumed a new figure and new motions, a part of the rays served it as feet for climbing up the stalk, and the rest followed its example: the whole now wore a very different aspect, instead of little globules of shapeless jelly at the bottom of the cells, there appeared so many radiated stars affixed to the stalks or rudiments of the leaves near those cells, and vibrating their loose rays in a very rapid and very entertaining manner. A pocket glass, through which my friend M——s was examining one of them, fell into the water, the disturbance which it occasioned had a very unexpected effect; in an instant all that we had been admiring disappeared, the creatures instantaneously shrunk back into their holes, and each was again the same shapeless lump of jelly that it had been before.

While I was admiring the event, M——s explained it to me, and took farther advantage of it to prove his assertions, and to inform himself of the manner of a thing, of which he had known only the effect from similar observations. He told me, this gelatinous appearance was the state of rest of the animal, and that into which it always shrunk at the appearance of danger; but that when every thing was quiet, the other was the form into which it threw itself, in order to feed. He poured out the water which had hitherto been in the vessel, and which was the clearest we could get, as it was only intended for giving us a view of the creatures, and in the place of it he put some that had drained from among the bundle of the plants, and threw three or four stalks of them into it. The other fluid had contained

tained no insects, but this was inhabited by a multitude of different shapes and forms ; they swam about nimbly in every part, and their motion, instead of deterring, invited the others out sooner than they would otherwise have appeared.

The vessel was placed in a full light, and we could determinately see all that passed in it. It was not many moments after the whole had been placed for observation, when the rays of the insects at the bases of the several leaves of the plant were all displayed as they had been before, and they were instantly thrown into the same kind of vibratory motion, but with more rapidity. The intent and use of this was now evident, it was not as it had at first appeared, an act of wantonness and play, but of great use to the creature. The animalcules that had been inhabitants of the water, and many others which had adhered to the stalks of the plant thrown into it, and had now quitted them, swam about together in every part; they were of a great variety of kinds, and different in size, but the largest of them bore no proportion to the size of the insects which were the immediate objects of our observation : as they floated about at liberty, it appeared very odd to us at first, to see them run into destruction every moment ; they were all indiscriminately the prey of the animal under observation : but as it did not go out of its place after them, it appeared odd that so many fell into its reach ; whenever we observed any of these swimming along near one of the larger, it on a sudden, instead of avoiding the danger, darted itself down upon it.

I was calling up to remembrance the old story of the fascination of the rattle-snake, and of the birds

birds and other creatures on which it preyed, instead of avoiding, running into its mouth ; M—s very gravely told me, that we would examine into the merits of that story some other time ; but that at present he saw what would very well explain all that was before us. He directed my eye towards one that was in full vigour, and had its rays in a very quick vibration ; he made me observe that this motion was not even in this case in all of them, but only in about two thirds of the number. We saw the spaces between these and those which remained at rest, at every interval, and we saw the water pouring through these in a continued stream, and with some degree of rapidity : on continuing the eye very earnestly towards the upper part of the animal, we saw that the motion was continued in the water, and in fine we perceived that the repeated vibration of these rays in a certain direction formed a kind of current or whirlpool in the water about the animal, drawing it from an extent somewhat larger than the circumference of the whole animal to the centre of the body, and throwing it out again at the apertures between the moving rays and those which lay at rest.

What appeared an act of choice in the little creatures which served as prey to this devourer, now appeared a necessity, the whirlpool forced with it all that was little enough to be taken in with its motions, and all were carried to the slaughter.

In this view we began to examine the manner of feeding more narrowly : if the creature carried down with the current of the water, were very small, it was suffered to pass through with the water,

water, and was let loose : if a little larger, its fate depended on the part of the body on which it fell ; if near the large opening, which may be called a false mouth, in the centre of the creature's body, it was taken into it ; if at a greater distance, no pains were taken to secure it, but it was carried off again : if a larger animalcule offered, the scene was different ; if it fell immediately into the mouth, it was swallowed as the others ; but if toward an edge of the body, and out of its reach, the rays served in the place of hands, and stopped it from rolling off, and drawing themselves inward, thrust it toward the aperture till it was received into it.

The variety of creatures that offered themselves as prey to these voracious animals afforded us yet more opportunity of admiring the provision the author of nature has made for the meanest of his works ; and indeed we had great reason to join in the truth of the old observation, that his wisdom is no where so much seen as in the minutest of his creatures. We fixed our eye upon an animalcule of larger than ordinary size ; its figure was somewhat like that of a shrimp, its bigness equal to one third of that of the creatures we were observing, and it was furnished not only with legs but with a kind of fins for swimming ; its motions were nimble, and its form had an appearance of robustness and strength ; we had seen this many times crossing the little whirlpools formed by the rays of these creatures, and continuing his course over them unconcernedly, while the lesser animalcules that were about it were all drawn in and devoured.

At length, a new scene presented itself : the creature which had so often swam over the current formed by the rays of this animal, with a perfect neglect, passed much nearer the body of one of them : this chanced to be that individual which was most perfectly under our eye ; the incident was fortunate for us, the event very surprizing. The creature no sooner found the other within its circle, than it closed upon it ; all the rays were in an instant drawn up together, and formed a kind of pyramid, such as they had done in their first appearance, only thicker and shorter ; the body of the victim was enclosed within the hollow, but its head appeared out at the extremity. The conflict was long and obstinate, the victim trying to disengage its body, the destroyer to draw it in farther ; we could see when the strength of the lesser creature failed, it had recourse to its mouth and a kind of forked claws, like those of the lobster, with which it would bite, pinch, and wound the rays, but all efforts were vain, the devourer persisted, and at length drew in the whole prey ; it was the busines of some moments to gorge it : the creature retained the pyramidal form some time, and afterwards the body might be seen distended as if full, and the rays, though spread open as before, had very little motion.

We directed our observations to another that was yet hungry, and after a repetition of all we had seen in this, had the opportunity of a yet more odd appearance ; among the creatures that swam about in the water, one of the very largest kind seemed a species of the bivalve shell-fish ; it was much of the shape of a muscle, but it appeared singular, that instead of keeping at the bottom,

bottom, as those shell-fish do, it carried its light covering all about with it. One of these at length came in the way of the general destroyer ; it had often crossed the whirlpool, as the other, unhurt and unregarding : but this was a new trial ; it moved close over the surface of the body, the rays all instantly closed upon it, and though not long enough to cover it entirely, kept it firm upon the body. By degrees less and less of it appeared above their points : the work was long, but in the end it was wholly taken in. A few moments more shewed us the rays, as in the former case, after gorging the large creature, thrown down again, and very languid in their motions ; but in this the appearance still was different, the body appeared bloated vastly more than its natural size with the included prey, and the creature appeared uneasy, and by several motions shewed itself eager to disgorge what it had too ravenously swallowed : I thought in the case of the serpent we are told of by some of the naturalists, that having sucked down a hedge-hog, perished by the wounds of its prickles. The case however here was otherwise, the shell-fish was not swallowed down the throat, or received into the stomach, it had only been taken into the great hollow in the centre of which the mouth is placed, and the motions and contortions that we observed in the creature, were not the effects of pain, but of its turning the unwieldy creature about, in order to get at every part of it with more facility ; after a few moments, the large aperture or false-mouth opened, and out was thrown what appeared at first sight to be the whole creature that had been swallowed, but a nearer examination shewed it to be only the shell.

It is not easy to conceive by what means a creature, so unprovided of what might seem the necessary organs for such a purpose, had loosened and taken out the body of so robust an insect from out its shell ; but it was done completely. In the larger shell-fish the body is fixed to the covering by a very strong ligament ; it is probably in the same manner, though different in degree, that this minute creature is fastened ; and there appear no means by which the animal that we had seen preying on it, could remove it.

I was in great astonishment at the whole form and functions of the animal ; I took it to be a creature *sui generis*, but M——'s assured me otherwise ; the species he told me was wholly unknown, and its singularities many and surprising, but it belongs, I find, to the class of the sea-nettles, a gelatinous animal found floating on the water, and so called from stinging the flesh ; and is not unlike, in some respects, to that beautiful species frequent in the West Indies, and described by a philosophical genius in the Transactions of the Royal Society, under the name of the Animal flower ; though its double mouth, its tail that fixes it to its place, and most other of its singular characters are perfectly different.

LETTER XXXI.

I Have had two days for the examining Avignon ; I could have spent as many more with satisfaction. It is a large and elegant city : the walls are very singular ; they seem intended rather for ornament than strength ; they are in the Gothic style, and are the neatest thing of their kind I have any where seen. They are the work of Clement the Sixth, to whom queen Joan, in the year 1348, when she fled from Naples, on the murther of her husband, and in dread of the resentment of her brother in-law the king of Hungary, sold the city for eighty thousand gold crowns. She thought to have recovered it afterwards, but before she could even attempt driving the enemy out of Naples, she was taken by her nephew, and suffered the punishment of her crime.

Avignon has been a very ancient town, it is now the capital of Venaissin in Provence : the first foundation of it is said to have been by the Phocians, not long after their building Marseilles. In the time of the Roman conquests we hear of it, and that with peculiar honours ; we find it in their writings under the name of Averno Cavarum, and it is eminent for the honour done, and privileges granted it, on account of its fidelity.

It is at this time the see of an archbishop, and is a pleasant as well as a large town ; the avenues to it are grand and agreeable, and it has many fine buildings. It has been a place of trade, but

the French at this time draw off as much of that from it as they can : what it wants however in commerce, is supplied to it by the residence of people of fortune ; and if less rich, it is a more pompous city than perhaps it has ever been : the pleasantness of the place, and some other considerations, carry so many families of affluence to it, that there is hardly a street without three or four palaces. The spirit of hospitality is also at a very high pitch ; people have many immunities here, which their neighbours, under the French government, want ; and are free from a number of duties and imposts ; popes have fled hither during the schisms of the church, and many families of note have continued here ever since, who attended them : there are for this reason many Italians, and perhaps the rivalry in point of liberality as well as splendor, between these noblemen of different countries, is in the place of virtue, and keeps up the hospitality as well as grandeur, for which Avignon is, and deserves to be eminent.

On the other side of the Rhone is Villeneuve. In crossing the river from this place we saw the ruins of a bridge of wood, seeming to have been a tolerable structure ; there are only two or three arches of it entire, on the Avignon side : the people of Avignon hold this in a kind of sacred esteem ; they call it the work of St. Benezet, a name canonized by one of the popes, who resided at Avignon. We were told that he was originally a poor shepherd, who was taught architecture by miracle, or inspiration, at twelve years old, and left several remains of a very great workman. How unhappy is our ingenious Ferguson ! If we were in a saint-making country, doubtless

doubtless the shepherd who had left that profession for astronomy, and had made such progress in it as to publish books, and to be distinguished with peculiar honours by a Royal Society, would have stood as fair for canonization : but rest in peace, St. Ferguson ; thou wouldest have known nothing of the matter during thy life, and it would not be worth thy while to purchase at six pence all that thy bones would feel of it afterwards.

Avignon boasts many pompous and elegant public buildings : the cathedral is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and is a very noble structure ; the chapel of the Virgin in it is elegant and well ornamented with paintings ; the great altar is a very superb one. There are a number of curious, and some very august tombs : Benedict the Twelfth has his memory preserved by a very noble mausoleum in this church ; but were it not as well for his character that this had been let alone ? were it not as eligible to a pontiff of understanding, to have rotted in silence, as to have every traveller, who sees this piece of sculpture, and hears to whom it is erected, say, Oh ! that Benedict who had Petrarch's sister for a mistress ! The famous John the Twenty-second is another of the popes buried here, and his tomb is also a grand one. You have told our friend G— that if his distant relation, distant in every sense of the word, had asked what kind of man he was, of any creature on earth beside himself, he would never have left him six pence. I would not say this was the case with John the Twenty-second and the papedom ; but certainly John was the first whose good opinion of himself ever procured it : the divisions in the conclave, at the

death of Clement the Fifth, were beyond all prospect of accommodation ; the cardinals at length agreed to refer to some one for a decision ; they chose the cardinal Dossa, who instantly nominated himself pope, and took this name of John the Twenty-second.

Many of the popes have resided through choice at Avignon; those from Clement the Fifth to Gregory the Eleventh, a space of seventy-two years, all did so ; but there were those who did it on a different motive ; there was a time when faction and menaces from without so influenced and terrified the conclave, that popes were nominated, and soon after superceded : the council of Constance put an end to this turbulent schism. But till that period each of the popes duly excommunicated his antagonist ; and of the two infallibles with whom the church was at that time honoured, the weaker usually resided at Avignon, leaving the wicked Rome to his more powerful rival.

The church of the Celestins took me many hours in the examination, and I wish I knew where to employ as many to-morrow with equal pleasure : there is one of the completest and best pieces of Mosaic work of its time, that I have seen ; it is the Carrying of the Cross, and is a piece of infinite labour. The life and miracles of St. Peter of Luxembourg, such are the modest words the good catholics use on these occasions, are painted, and not badly, on a chapel dedicated to him. This noble saint was preferred to the cardinal's hat at eighteen, for his remarkable sanctity ; and it is recorded as an act of great praise, on the tomb of Clement the Seventh, that

it
the remains of the celebrated saint Peter of Luxembourg

LXXXI

it was he who bestowed the hat on the young saint,
miraculis coruscantem, such are the words, by which
we see that the satyrift's

Sepulchral lies our holy walls to grace,
is not a reflection only on our own country.

You have read of the most illustrious monarch Rene, the fidler and the painter king; who, as Hannibal lost the world for a mistress, gave up to these scarce less honourable pursuits in a sovereign the fairest opportunities of recovering Naples from the house of Arragon: but he had what he liked; let the ambitious look to their own concerns. I have an extreme odd reason for naming this odd king to you: he was not so devoted to the arts as to neglect the gentle calls of love; he had his mistress, and a favourite one; we have such a memorial of his passion as the whole romantic and amorous world cannot equal: the unhappy lady died while he was gone on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. At his return he ordered her coffin to be opened; and, as a mixt trophy of affection and devotion, he with his own hand drew the figure of the finest woman of her age, falling into a putrid skeleton: the picture was consecrated as a memento mori to the Avignon beauties, and is preserved in the vestry of the church I have just named to you: it is not badly painted for a piece of that time, and there is sufficient proof of its authenticity by the style in which it is done; but the whole earth cannot shew so shocking a subject.

The church of the Cordeliers is honoured by the remains of the celebrated Laura, Petrarch's

Laura; a lady, if we may believe those who were less romantic and less in love than the poet, possessed of the several accomplishments of body and mind in a degree superior to almost any of her sex. Her figure is preserved in many paintings, but I must except, so far as my opinion will warrant it, out of that number, a famous portrait kept in a private house in the neighbourhood of this church, and pretended to be an original. This indeed gives one ideas of her person, by no means agreeable to those we find in Petrarch's description: perhaps the colour of the hair in this unknown picture has been the only circumstance that led to the opinion of its being hers; and that is rather red than the true golden.

The other pictures of her express a most beautiful person, and an air of good sense and modesty that is not to be described, nor to be well conceived by any who have not seen the pictures. Her accomplishments of mind are sufficiently blazoned by the poet, who was her lover, and by his contemporaries; but the greatest compliment that ever was paid her, was that the then pope offered Petrarch, who was in orders, a dispensation to marry her, which she was not averse to, but which he, by a very happy compliment declined. The only monument of this lady, so celebrated in her life, is a plain grave-stone, distinguished no otherwise than by the mullet, the arms of the family, and an inscription of much more modern date in Latin. This was engraved at the instance of a Portuguese gentleman, who drew it up as he passed through Avignon on his travels, and was at the expence of its being cut in the stone.

Two hundred years after the burial of this celebrated woman, a piece of parchment was discovered, which Petrarch had slipped under her head as they put her into her coffin, and which contained some elegant Italian verses; they preserve this with great care in the vestry of the church. It was discovered when Francis the First caused the tomb to be opened, that he might see the remains of a woman, whom he regretted that fortune had placed in an age so distant from his own.

What there is farther worth notice in this town are two colleges of Jesuits, both handsome and well contrived buildings: some tombs, rather remarkable for the quantity, or the elegance of the marble, than for the sculpture. In the church of St. Martial, belonging to the Benedictines: and that of cardinal Damianus, in St. Dedier's, in a better taste than the others. There is also here an university, a court of inquisition, and a mint where money is struck with the pope's arms. The Jews are also allowed a synagogue, but they are obliged to go distinguished with a yellow hat, and they are kept sufficiently poor. There is a convent of Carthusians, on the other side of the Rhone, in the church of which are some good paintings. I could not deny myself the pleasure of visiting the Parnassus of Petrarch; it is a mountain overlooking the valley of Vancluse, and the fountain of that name, the source of the Sorgue: I reverenced the place where some of the finest elegies in the world have been produced; I thought the name of Laurz still resounded from the caves and rocks, once vocal from the breath of Petrarch. M—'s observed, that the place must have been once covered with the sea, or with the waters of the

deluge ; for that he never saw so many or so fine
conchæ anomiae.

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LETTER XXXII.

I Have reached the capital of Provence : Aix is the most charmingly situated of any town that I have seen ; it stands in a delightful plain, the Are, a little but a clear and rapid river, waters it ; it is surrounded, at a proper distance, with hills, and these have all their springs and rivulets trickling down their sides. You can look from no part of it, without seeing an amphitheatre that sets in an ill light all the artificial works of the Romans. With all this beauty the country is rocky as well as hilly, and more calculated for admiration than for use. What different things recommend a place to different people ! After all the encomiums I have passed upon the situation of Aix, the inhabitants would very gladly part with the fine hills for dirty pastures, and had rather a muddy river should bring vessels to their quays than the clear stream shew every pebble at its bottom.

Several of the springs that trickle down the hills about Aix are medicinal, probably this circumstance influenced people to build a town here long before the Romans were heard of in Gaul. Aix, as it stands at present, is however doubtless of Roman origin ; it was built by Sextius Calvinius, a general of that victorious nation, and called from his name Aqua Sextiæ. He made it a

place

place of arms, and his countrymen used it afterwards to keep the Salii in awe. There are some remains of antiquity about it, but they are not many or very considerable; one of the most observable is the ruins of the ancient bathing place, discovered in the suburbs in the year 1704. It has been a building of some consequence and in good taste.

Aix is a large and well built city; it resembles Paris more than any other town of France: the houses are good, and the public buildings considerable, and the squares and fountains, which are all in good condition, add a great deal to its splendor: but the most considerable and by much the most delightful thing at Aix, is the Cours, calculated to please more senses than the eye; this is a superb and elegant place, it is fifteen hundred feet in length, and is inclosed between two very lofty and superb rows of buildings, each planted with a double row of trees in the front, and in the middle of the walk there are placed, at certain distances, three or four fountains. The summer in Provence is little less hot than in the most southern tracts of Spain or Italy; the reverberation of the sun's rays from the rocky hills with which this part of France abounds, is one principal occasion of this; and against this heat the coolness of the fountains and shades of the Cours at Aix are a most agreeable defence.

What I observed of the remains of Roman architecture, were no more than the portal of an ancient temple; it is not in the highest style, but there is a simplicity and symmetry in it that charmed me: it is now at the little church of St. Sauveur.

veur. There are three towers remaining in the walls of the city, doubtless Roman, but of no great curiosity ; and some vestiges of the old baths at the springs out of the town ; but they have in a manner burried these in the buildings erected lately for the accommodation of those who drink the waters.

The cathedral is a Gothic building, rather elegant than superb. They shew here, with great veneration, a little chapel, in which the people are made to believe Mary Magdalen died. The church and college of the Jesuits are elegant, and the Gentlemen's oratory depends also on them. I was charmed with some paintings there ; there are seven of them ; the manner is great in them all, and the design correct : in an altar-piece, the subject of which is the Annunciation, there is a correctness of design, and boldness and concomitant grace in the figures, an expression in the countenances, and an ease in the draperies that at once charmed and surprized me ; it was with great eagerness that I asked what hand, for it was perfectly unknown to me, had executed them ; I was ignorant before that Puget was a painter : I have had occasion to mention his name to you with great respect as a statuary, and from what I have seen of his works, which is but a very small part, and even that not the best, am not afraid to pronounce him the first sculptor of France in his time. Good God ! what a genius has here been as it were buried ; a man who in both arts might indisputably have rivalled Angelo, by his own remissness, or by the neglect of patrons, who shall say which ? has left hardly a name behind him.

Aix

Aix does not want sculptures in its churches; some of them, though the artist is not well known, to me evidently speak themselves the works of Puget. The tombs of the old counts and countesses of Provence, in the cathedral, have a great air of rude grandeur. The mausoleum of Charles of Anjou, Valois, and Hubart de la Garde, are at once splendid and elegant: and many others deserve attention, though I think they will hardly countenance a long description to you. The font of the cathedral is much admired; it is a good piece of workmanship, and is on the model of that in the Lateran. I mentioned the painter king, who had given so extraordinary a portrait of his mistress, in the last letter; in this place I saw another of himself, done also, as is recorded, by his hand, and far from a mean performance, for its time; his arms are under it, and there appear those of Arragon, on an escutcheon of pretence: he styled himself king of Arragon, in right of his mother.

The people of Aix retain to the day a kind of enthusiastic veneration for the name of this monarch; they sing anthems of his composing at their solemn processions, and call the walks which he frequented, by his name.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

I Do not know a town in all France that has so much of the genius of the nation, if I may so express it, as Marseilles; every different view of it shews you as is were a quite different place; nor is this variety, under trifling circumstances, the only thing in which it favours of the manners of the people. It has the peculiar advantage of seeming to strangers ten times as big as it really is. If you see it from the sea, you confound with it the three islands which stand before it and form its port; if from the land side, its Environs are so full of summer houses and other little retreats of that kind, that its extent is yet more encreased to the imagination, than in the former view. From the town, the prospect on the land side is extremely agreeable, and the sea-ward shews a noble harbour.

The situation of Marseilles is so advantageous that there is no doubting there having been a town there from the earliest time when France had commerce with the rest of the world: we hear of it in the remotest antiquity. The Phocians are generally understood to have first settled there; the Romans make frequent mention of it, though one would think, by the manner in which Cæsar mentions it, that two of the three islands, which form the entrance into the port, had risen out of the sea since he was there; he mentions only one, nor is it possible to guess which of the three, if they were all there, he meant, by that he mentions. The town stands on a fine bay in the Mediterranean; and as one enters it from the sea,

sea, the forts and citadel, the convents and churches, and the extent of buildings that intermix with, and run out every way beyond them, form at once the most august and agreeable piece for painting that I think I have any where seen.

The inside is not less elegant than what is seen as the out, from a distant view. Marseilles, that was in very early times so eminent for its schools of literature, that the Greeks, the Romans, and the Gauls have all boasted of having received their education there; Marseilles, that stands immortalized for its defence against the Roman arms, that obtained the privilege of an ally by refusing to submit till Cæsar summoned it as a conquered place, is at this time in no inferior state; it is one of the largest and most flourishing towns in France, the buildings are more magnificent than almost in any other; and, which is of vastly more real honour and importance, the trade is greater in it than in any city of the French dominions.

What nature has given it in the advantage of situation, she has secured to it by the same means; the entrance into the harbour admits but one ship at a time, and is easily shut with a chain; it is of an oval form, a very spacious quay surrounds it; from this the town goes backward, ascending all the way, and the hill behind it forms one of the finest amphitheatres imaginable. There is a castle of considerable strength upon the D'If, the smallest of the three islands in the harbour. The citadel is also near the harbour; it is a noble building; it commands the whole town, and its out-works reach to the port; and there are beacons for sixty miles along the coast, to alarm the country

country upon the approach of an hostile power. The town is well fortified with walls, towers, and bastions. Lewis the Fourteenth well knew its importance ; he not only enlarged, but strengthened it greatly. The artificers in this city are more numerous than in any in all France. The inhabitants are computed at a hundred and twenty-five thousand.

They distinguish the buildings of different periods into what they call the Old and the New Town : in the Old, the houses are poor, and the streets narrow and dirty ; the New is one of the elegantest places in Europe. The Course is, beyond dispute, the finest street in Europe ; the great entrance to the town is through it, the houses on each side are magnificent and regular, and they are so distant that there are fine walks of trees between them. To the right from this lies the New Town, with the arsenal, the exchange, and the quay, which is terminated on one side by a good range of buildings, and on the other by a basin, capable of receiving five hundred vessels, and of securing them at anchor in any weather.

The gates, which are six, are well built ; the patrons of the town, St. Lazarus and St. Victor, have their statues, nor badly executed, on the Royal Gate, which is the principal of the six. The cathedral is dedicated to the first of these gentlemen, and is a very singular edifice ; it is very ancient, and extremely irregular in its form ; it is dark and disagreeable, and stands in a very bad part of the city. It has been generally supposed to have been a pagan temple, and the statue of a goddess of universal nature, named

named Cybele, Isis, or Diana of the Ephesians ; for they are all confounded in the figure, and by most who name them, has given occasion to an opinion, that it was originally built in honour of the last ; but this is a very sorry foundation for a conjecture delivered with such an air of certainty.

It is not to be conceived how prolifick error is of error, or how easily men of an enthusiastic turn pass from the imagining one thing, to the affirming another ; from the fancy of Diana of the Ephesians having been worshipped here, they have raised a story of their conversion from that superstition by Mary Magdalen ; they not only assure us of her having taken infinite pains on this head, but shew a little chapel, just opposite to the gate of the church, which they assure us is built upon the very spot where she used to take her station, in order to plead with them in favour of the christian religion, as they went into the door of the temple dedicated to their idol. As there is now no sort of foundation beyond the most vague conjecture, for the standing of any pagan temple in this place, the rest of the tradition certainly is on a very fickle basis. However that be, the Marseillians acknowledge their conversion to have been the work of that saint. They preserve a scull with great veneration, which they say belonged to St. Lazarus, her brother. I wonder some good body has not furnished them with a remnant of her stays, or a fragment of the fringe of her under-petticoat ; it is pity people in such a humour for veneration should not be supplied with objects for it. However

However it may stand with men of your judgment and of my suspicions as to this sacred relique, there is a pagan one which gave me great pleasure, and carries some better proofs of its origin ; it is in the court before the bishop's palace ; it is a Composite pillar, large, entire, and very fair : it is one of the most beautiful remains of its kind that I have seen, and gives one a very great opinion of the building to which it has belonged. There was, for a long time, a block of marble, of very considerable dimensions, on the ground near it, doubtless a part also of the same building ; but this has been removed to Aix ; Hubert de la Garde's tomb is made out of it.

There do not seem to be any where in France people so fond of antiquities as the Marseillians, but it is with little foundation that they boast of them. Their church of Notre Dame des Accoles they will have to have been a temple of Apollo Delphinus ; and their nunnery of St. Sauveur, of Minerva ; but there is no more than a groundless tradition for it. There are a few incon siderable bas-reliefs and inscriptions at St. Victor, but these, and the pillar already mentioned, are all I saw truly antique there.

Having named St. Victor, I cannot omit to tell you that it is an abbey, with the appearance of a citadel ; it is a large and noble edifice ; it stands at the foot of the citadel, and is enclosed with very strong walls, flanked with towers of a great height and strength. It is the oldest foundation of the Benedictines in Europe ; they boast of it as the work of one of the old kings of Burgundy,

Burgundy, of the Mærovingian race, but it would be just to set its origin much earlier. It was originally dedicated to St. Reta; but the new saints among the Roman catholics have a strange way of unnesting the old ones, by taking their houses over their heads; St. Victor's bones were no sooner brought to it, but he became its patron. Over the great gate he is celebrated with an inscription, MASSILIANI VERE VICTOR CIVESQUE TVERE.

I was pleased with a monument here, though I scarce know to what in particular I should attribute the satisfaction it gave me; it is one of those beauties that strike us when we view them altogether, but will not bear taking to pieces: it is to Pope Urban the Fifth, and stands in the choir. There is another of Eusebius, in the lower church, also worth notice: here also is commemorated the fate of twenty-four young ladies, who, when the Visigoths took Marfeilles by storm, disfigured their faces to avoid their incontinence; they were all put to the sword by these barbarians, and have monuments in this abbey.

The Benedictines of this house are the most powerful and the richest of any of their order; their treasury is very opulent; they shew you reliques of saints, which they affect to prize as their greatest possessions; but they do not fail to point out to you also their riches in gold, silver, and things of more certain value; they do this with an affected neglect, which with many sets them still higher than their real value. The great commerce of Marseilles with the Levant has more than once brought in the plague among them; this terrible distemper, about thirty years since,

carried of eighty thousand inhabitants ; the city was a desert, but the situation, the success of the manufactures, and the extensive commerce invited numbers to fill up the vacancy, and it is perhaps more populous than ever : but such care is now taken, that they scarce fear a new visitation from the same quarter ; the islands which front the port are three miles from the town, and there are lazarets on all of them, for the performing quarantine, a custom they have the prudence and address to render at once indispensable and easy.

The summer-houses that cover the face of the country on the land side, belong principally to the middling tradesmen of the town ; the custom of having them is almost universal. The tradespeople are early up, and they attend their business with an indefatigable industry, till about four in the afternoon ; the business and the extreme heat of the day are then over : if the good man be married, he places his wife on an ass between a pair of panniers, in one of which there is a child or two, if he has them, in the other some wine, oil, and bread ; he drives the ass, and when they come to the retreat, they solace together in a harmony, that it were well if those, who think themselves much above them, would imitate.

LETTER XXXIV.

I Do not know so strange a country as between Marseilles and Toulon, especially that part of it nearest the former. The road is over deserts and mountains, too horrible for description; here you are to climb a precipice up a perpendicular rock as strait as a wall, and the least slip of your foot threatens destruction; there the way is scarce less terrible on horseback; you pass along a narrow causeway, on one side rise perpendicular rocks till you lose them in the clouds, on the other falls a precipice as perpendicular, and too deep to look upon; here some vast misshapen rock is to be ascended with difficulty, and descended again with danger; there the vast cracks seem to have loosened the very part you stand upon, and to threaten tumbling with you into the vale below; over head in this place hangs a horizontal fragment, threatening you with its fall; and a little farther the unjointed pieces rise one over another, and threaten accumulated destruction of the same kind. To look at the place, you would call it inaccessible; but whither will not devotion make its way? It is to an enthusiastic fire of this kind, that we owe the knowledge of its being possible to pass these formidable scenes on soberer occasions; religion led the way, and trade, pleasure, and curiosity have pressed upon her steps.

In the most terrible part of this forbidding scene lies St. Baume; it is six leagues from Marseilles; but were it sixty, the hereditary devotion of that place would carry multitudes to a place where Mary Magdalen used to retire. They shew

her grotto, as they call it, upon the surface of the vast rock, and have built a chapel to her honour on the spot. There is a spring, of whose miraculous virtues amazing things have been recorded; the rock also is full of crevices, and water issues out in every part about, except in one place, where, as they say, the saint had used to sit: this may be true without a miracle; in so uncomfortable a place, if there were one dry spot, any body in their senses would select it for such a purpose; and it does not appear to me that such a one need to have been made by miracle. They led me to the grotto, and I had curiosity equal to the devotion of many of the visitants; I climbed the steep rock a great deal higher, to see the holy pillar on the summit, erected, as the pious Dominican who shewed me the place (there is a cloyster of them by the chapel) assured me, in commemoration of the known miracle of that saint's being many times a day taken out of her grotto, and lifted up thither by angels, to enjoy a fore-taste of the beatific vision. There is a little oratory near the spot, it stands on the verge of a most frightful precipice, and the story of this miraculous elevation is painted on it: who can doubt its truth, when there is such authority for it.

I congratulated myself for my safety as soon as I had got down; the remembrance chills me. The rest of the road has something more agreeable; part of it lies through an open and a cultivated country; but rocks and mountains here and there return upon one.

Toulon owes, as Marseilles, its considerableness to its situation: it is a noble sea-port, nor is

is there any time of which we have record, in which it was not in being. The Marseillians are of very ancient origin, and Toulon seems almost coeval with them. One of their first works, when the earliest of the ancient inhabitants settled there, was the building a castle, and some other edifices, where Toulon now stands, to defend the coast against pyrates as well as future invaders. In the time of the Roman conquests it was not less known than Marseilles; Pliny mentions it under the name of Portus Citharista: it is possible it might obtain its name Toulon from Telo Martius, a Roman tribune, settled a colony there, and afterwards called it by his own name.

The regard that was paid to the situation has its foundation in pleasure as well as advantage; it is at once the finest and safest port in France; it is open only to the south, on all other parts hills, and those very high ones, defend it: these are not composed of rocks, or formed into precipices at once barren and frightful, but they are covered with vineyards and plantations; at a distance there is more the look of England than of France behind this town, but when we approach nearer, it gives instead of that a yet more elegant appearance; the gardens of the Hesperides are seen, where we thought we had complimented in supposing that we saw those of England: the olive is as frequent as the vine; and beside this native plenty of wine and oil, the pomegranate, and the almond, the lemon, citron, and orange are all seen loaded with their pompous stores.

Toulon has not only from nature so much of beauty and wealth, but it has strength also, and those who are possessed of it have thought it worth the while to add to this, by art; the treasure was worth keeping at the expence of some care and trouble. The Romans took it, as they did every other town they came up with; but after the declension of that empire, Toulon became again a little sovereignty; it had its own rulers till in the year 1270, the heiress of its honours sold it to Charles the First count of Provence, in whose domains it stood: from his natural heirs it devolved upon the kings of France, who were enough informed of its convenience and natural advantages, to add to its strength and extent, and make it their place of arms and warlike stores on the Mediterranean. It owed much to Henry the Fourth; he built the present walls and the two royal bastions; and he added the moles that in a manner shut in the harbour; they leave the entrance narrow, and capable of being shut up with a chain, and defended by a fort on each side. The docks, yards, and foundries are owing to Lewis the Fourteenth; the same monarch also finished the fortifications.

There are a great many public edifices in Toulon, though it is far from a large town; and the streets are well built. The harbour extends along the whole front of the town; the quay is commodious, and paved with brick: the whole is seen to great advantage on rowing out to the mouth of the harbour; we took this advantage, and I think the eye can no where be filled with so glorious an amphitheatre.

Among

Among the public buildings, the cathedral is dedicated to the Virgin and St. Cyriac; the great altar is a magnificent and a good one, and there are two handsome side chapels: the town-house is a fine piece of architecture, rather elegant than pompous, but perfectly in rule in every part; that Puget whom I have mentioned with so much respect as a statuary and a painter, has the honour of having been the architect of this; what a genius! eminent in the three sciences, and yet less heard of in either than many of his countrymen, who have been less deserving in any one of them. To the judicious hand of Lewis the Fourteenth Toulon owes the magazines and arsenals which regard the marine, and which set it before all the arsenals of the kingdom.

The school of the Gardes Marines is a noble institution; the youth are here taught the exercise of small arms, and are instructed at the same time in gunnery, navigation, and engineering; and while they are thus instructed in the art of war, their morals are also under immediate cognizance of those who are strict enough in regulating them. This is doubtless the best academy of its kind in the world. The other offices created by that monarch are, the rope-yard, where that manufacture is carried on from the dressing of the hemp to the preparing the largest cordage; the workhouse of arms, a stately edifice, where all the arms used on board men of war are made; the St. Barbe, where the utensils and instruments for gunners are prepared; the offices for smiths, carpenters, and other workmen in their several branches; the park of artillery, where, beside cannon and mortars, bullets, shells, &c. kept in readiness in very

great

great abundance ; this park is surrounded by a canal, and the banks of that are covered with anchors. Beside these there are the storehouse for sails and rigging, the foundery for cannon, &c. the bake-house, a structure that amazes every body, its numerous ovens are disposed in a strangely convenient manner. The Field of Battle, where the marine guards exercise, is a well contrived spot; it is under the wall of the arsenal : and the machine for putting the masts in ships is admired by all who see it ; it is in the old dock, near the chain.

When prince Eugene sat down before Toulon, in 1707, there were in it by computation six hundred brass cannon, and more than three thousand iron ones ; sixteen first rate men of war, and a vast number of other rates, beside fire-ships and bomb-ketches almost out of number : all these, and a vast store of naval armaments of all kinds, must have fallen into the hands of the allies, if accidents more than strength or judgment in the besieged, had not prevented. Eighteen or twenty large men of war, of those that had suffered in the fight of Malaga, were indeed sunk in the mouth of the harbour, to prevent the entrance of the enemy's fleet ; but if the confederates had been united, and the siege conducted as it ought, this would not have saved them,

LETTER XXXV.

THANKS to heaven ! I have set foot in Italy : you must not wonder to find me so devout, I have reason ; fear makes every body religious, and I assure you my voyage from Toulon has not been without danger, and the conclusion of it threatened as much as the worst of the preceding part. I embarked at Toulon for Genoa, and I am there ; but if you had been with us six hours ago, you would have thought we were born to be very near, but never to come into it. The sea of Genoa, or, as it is commonly called, the gulph of Genoa, but it is a monstrous one, was in such a commotion, that I have expected nothing but to be plunged into a deeper ; but the danger is over, I am on shore, and I have entered the land to which all my hopes have been so long bent. You cannot imagine a man can have much to say to you after a six hours visit to a place he never saw before, but I have a very extraordinary circumstance to set out with.

The Genoese, though they lie on the sea-coast, have no fish, they want them to a proverb ; nor do I indeed wonder ; creatures that may chuse a calm and quiet situation, have nothing to tempt them into such a turbulent piece of water. The abuse of reason might make man change a better situation for a worse, it does so every day indeed ; but these creatures have only instinct, and that never leads them wrong. By what accident it happened I know not, but the same tempest that at last threw us into port, washed on shore one of these natives of the deep, and a very extraordi-

ry one. All Genoa went out out to stare at it : I have curiosity, and I could not but follow. I was not surprised to find that none of the people knew what it was ; by what I had heard of the want of all fish at this place, I should not have wondered if they had been as unacquainted with a roach or a flounder : M——s was the only one who could inform either me or them about it;) his manner of examining it shewed he was no stranger to its nature, and made every body attentive to what he said about it. On their enquiring what it was, he answered them, in their own language, the sea-devil (this is one of its names ; but they were so little informed of this, that a considerable number were crossing themselves, and I was in some pain for my unexperienced friend, who, though he seemed to know very well how to avoid the monstrous jaws of this creature, had no skill in the more terrible ones of the church.

The creature was all this time alive, and in violent motions. It lay on a piece of ground not perfectly even, which gave it opportunity of varying its positions. I had an opportunity of seeing a creature so extremely unlike to any thing I had heard of, that I should have condemned the author as an extravagant fool, who had described it.

What would you imagine, to read of a fish whose head alone was equal to three times its whole body ? Yet this, taking in the circumference as well as length, was certainly the case here. You have seen tadpoles in our ditches, it is the only living thing that but at all resembles this fish ; and it is from this resemblance, though

though indeed a very remote and faint one, that M——'s says the writers on these subjects have called this the frog-fish, and rana pisca-trix : you know a tadpole is a young frog, and these geniuses are above descending to particulars.

I remember, when I was in England, we were entertained with a figure of a Harlequin opening a most extensive mouth, in order to jump down his own throat ; an exploit not at all above the belief of people, who had paid their money to see a man get into a quart bottle : the enormity of the mouth in that figure was nothing in proportion to the extent of it in the reality in this fish. I told you the head was monstrous in its dimensions ; the mouth opens all the way from its front to the back, and the creature, like the crocodile, moves the upper jaw as well as the under. The immense expanse, the white floor of the mouth, and the vast tongue, all armed for destruction, gave a most frightful idea as it opened, and the clash as it shut again was astonishing and horrible. The armature of the teeth is terrifying to the last degree : there are many series of them all round both jaws, the tongue is also covered with them toward its root, and the entrance of the throat is surrounded with them ; they are long, and sharp as so many needles ; they all stand obliquely, pointing inwards, so that nothing, once seized, can escape again.

The fish was about six feet in length ; its head was bony, and full of prickles ; and its eyes, which look not side ways, but directly upwards, rolled terribly. It continued its strength and vigour

vigour so long out of the water, and threw itself about in so turbulent a manner, that I hardly thought we were safe who were too near it; other people took the alarm, and were making off, but the intrepid M—s caught hold of a large stick which one of the sailors had in his hand, and placing himself directly in the front of the creature, at the next opening of the mouth, thrust his weapon so dexterously into it that it came out at its side.

We had, among other singularities, imagined that this fish had no gills, we had seen none; but instead of having pierced the body of the creature, as we imagined, M—s had thrust the stick through one of them. He threw the devil on his back. Now, says the champion, you shall see his hands: he was as good as his word; he very dexterously threw the fish over, and on the breast we saw two hands, perfectly like those of the human species, and of a flesh colour: we had but a short view of these, for the fish threw itself over again, as M——, who had no intent to kill it yet, had taken out his stick. We now began to examine it more strictly, and our instructor to give a full detail of its manner of living: whether through faintness, or from what other cause it were, the fish no longer opened his tremendous mouth. M—s began his lecture by telling us he could make it do this as often as he pleased; he only touched one or the other of two long and slender horns, as it were, that stood on the front of its head, and the motion was constantly performed as he had predicted.

From

From this circumstance he began, and he continued to explain the whole history and economy of the creature's life, as regularly as if he had been used to live at the bottom of the sea with it. This wide mouth, you may be sure, gentlemen, said he, was intended to take in a great deal of food, but it belongs to a monstrous and unwieldy creature, who has no power of going in search of it with that rapidity with which the other inhabitants of the deep would shun the danger. Nature, who provides for all her creatures, has however not left this destitute. This fish lives entirely at the bottom of the sea, it crawls along the sand by means of those hands, which are indeed only fins of that odd form; as it never rises after its prey, there required something to tempt them down to it; you see it open its mouth on my touching one of those horns, that will explain it to you. You wondered at the situation of its eyes, which are not at the sides, but on the top of the head; but you will now see the reason, as it always lies on the bottom, it has no occasion to look any way but upward; and this is not particular to it, the flat fish all have it in a certain degree; and there is another kind, in which it is more conspicuous than even in this, that is the uranoscope, or star-gazer.

As the prey of this fish is always above it, the eye no sooner discovers some of them swimming within any moderate distance, but it prepares for the tempting of them down. You shall see how this is done; these slender horns that you see on its head, which are like a couple of pieces of limber whale-bone, and are tipped with

with a white grisly substance, looking like flesh, are moveable ; these are the baits with which the subtle angler entraps the others : it no sooner sees a fish above, fit for its purpose, but it moves one or both of these baits ; the greedy creature, not distinguishing to what they belong, makes his stroke at them ; the wary monster bends them lower as he comes toward them, and draws the other so near his mouth, that while it thinks itself about to eat, it is devoured. The oblique teeth secure the prey beyond a possibility of escape, so that the devourer has no occasion for the means of following what cannot get away.

The crowd were ready to adore the wisdom and sagacity of this interpreter of the works of nature : I left him there ; I saw the fish die, and had no farther curiosity ; but he is taking drawings of its several parts, and seems ravished with delight at the thought of giving a perfect account of a fish, which, he says, no one has yet explained according to the doctrine of the Artedian ichthyology.

L E T -

LETTER XXXVI.

I Have spent two days with great satisfaction at Genoa : the exploit of the fish, instead of bringing M——'s into some scrape, as I had feared, has spread such a report of his knowledge, that we are treated with very uncommon marks of respect ; and I find myself in a more agreeable situation than I have been at any time since my setting out.

Genoa stands pleasantly ; it has the form of an amphitheatre, and is upon the slope of a little hill, with a gulph before it, opening into the sea ; from the sea there is a most glorious prospect of the city : this was more than I could have told you on my landing, for the wind was south-west, and very violent : when we came into the gulph, we had other thoughts than of prospects. I have since been rowed out, on purpose, under the advantage of a particularly fine hour.

The town is strong and beautiful ; the side that fronts the sea is a continued range of palaces, and the rest of it in general well built ; the fortifications are very strong, the extent of the town is about six miles, and they are double all the way, and reach completely to the shore at each extremity ; in front there are two moles, extending round the little harbour, which has been built within the great one : and there is also a third, began since the French bombardment in 1684. The innermost of the fortifications on the land side immediately incloses the city ; the outer one is considerably remote, and takes in all the rising

rising ground that commands it : a noble caution ! and not more than the people of so charming as well as important a place, owed to themselves for its preservation.

People who sail by the town, must imagine it is much larger than it is, from the number of palaces that stand on the sea-shore at a small distance from it, at the one end as well as the other. The city however does not need this to appear a very splendid one. The houses stand close, and are very high ; they are built of brick or stone, but of whichever of these materials, they are all covered over in front with plaster, and painted with a variety of figures. This gives the whole town a chearfulness that I have no where else seen ; the paintings are many of them landscapes, some are ornamented with the imaginary, to put you in mind that they want the real orders of architecture.

I cannot mention the palaces without naming that of Doria, and doing honour to that ornament of it, even in Italy, Andrew, who built it in Charles the Fifth's time. I had always thought greatly of him, from what I had heard, but a sight of the palace has set him in a yet higher light. This makes vastly the most elegant appearance even in this city of palaces ; it has a façade of a surprizing extent ; the situation is a very fine one, and the sea runs under the walls of the gardens. The architecture is perfect beyond that of any other palace I have yet seen ; the gardens are large and elegant, and have a profusion of fountains and statues. There are also good paintings, and some high finished busts and bass-reliefs in the house. The skill in the polite

arts for which we reverence the name of this great man, is the smallest part of his praise; he was the principal of a family famous for the services which they had done their country. The inscription over the gate of the palace, contains a long detail of his services, and of the honours he obtained as a reward to them: and at the entrance of the doge's palace there is a statue erected to him, with the glorious title of Deliverer of the Commonwealth.

The roofs of the houses here are all flat, and their great height and the narrowness of the streets makes the lower rooms dark, but at the same time that it shuts out the light, it defends them from the sun, which is scorching hot in the summer months. The profusion of marble throughout this city, adds to the claim it puts in for the title of Genoa the Stately: indeed there is no city, of those I have seen, that comes near it for magnificence. I wish I could say as much of some of the public buildings as I can of some of the private ones: the cathedral is a large pile; but it makes a very poor figure in comparison of the many that I have already mentioned; what then shall I think of it, when I have seen those to which I am going? The marble pillars that support the roof are grand.

I saw here a silver vase, supported on four columns of porphyry, and said to contain the ashes of St. John Baptist: I pay about as much credit to this story as to the legend of the famous dish they have also here. You must have heard of it: travellers tell us it is made of a single emerald; and you will guess what sort of a gem it must have been from which it was cut, when

you remember that the good fathers assert, it is the very dish out of which our Saviour eat the pashal lamb. What absurd and monstrous traditions. They say also, as to its origin and antiquity, that it was a present brought by the queen of Sheba to Solomon, when she made him her visit. It is indeed a very noble and curious thing : it is of one piece, and is the finest jasper I have seen. It is of a beautiful grass green, and very transparent, but that not uniformly throughout, nor has a proper regard been paid to its obscurer places by the workman : it is easy to see, that out of the same piece a much finer thing might have been wrought by a modern artist.

One would think the possessors of this gem had a mind to countenance the old stories, of those enormous ones said to be in the possession of some of the monarchs of the east. We read of one sent as a present to an Egyptian monarch, that was four cubits in length and three in breadth ; and of an obelisk in the temple of Jupiter somewhere, which was composed of only four emeralds, and was forty foot long. Theophrastus mentions these things as related in their commentaries, but while he mentions he discredits them ; and speaking of his own knowledge, calls the emerald a small stone even among the gems. Pliny talks of enormous emeralds also, but these were certainly like that at Genoa ; the cups, and the columns and the dish were all jaspers, or other great stones, dignified by pride or ignorance with that name.

You will say that I have spoke slightly of the cathedral at Genoa, only to give a better grace to the encomium I am about to bestow upon another

other of the churches. That of the Annunciation is the gayest thing in this gay city ; the most magnificent among all the superb buildings that crowd into this place. It is greatly superior, in point as well as elegance, to all that I have seen, and gives me a very good specimen of what I had taught myself to expect from the churches of Italy. It is a large and highly finished building, and is in all the shewy taste of the Genoese. The whole roof is gilded ; the walls are covered with the most exquisite paintings that could be done in the time ; the pillars are marble, and highly finished. One family, the Lomellini, began and compleated this glorious edifice ; tho' it is hardly fair to use the word compleated, since they left the front unfinished. This was a common practice at that time, and gave an opportunity to people of a religious turn to make decorations : but this required a large one, sixty thousand ducatines being the price required to finish it ; a sum not less than sixteen thousand pounds.

The rest of the edifice is finished in a manner that does the highest honour to the founders. The architecture is pure and noble ; the sculpture is of as high taste as any thing of the kind that I have yet seen, and the paintings speak the master as eminently. There is a piece by Procacino, on the inside of the facade, that gave me most satisfaction : it is the last supper, and is in so large a proportion, that there is a majesty even in that circumstance which awes and astonishes, while the beauty of the design supports it. There is something in these large pieces, that puts one in mind of the great spirit expressed in the colossal statues of the antients. Had those mount-

tains of brass and stone been ill formed, their enormous magnitude would but have made them more conspicuously objects of contempt: but while the correctness of the statuary was joined with his nobleness of spirit, the praise that was commanded by the work was attended by wonder; and the greatest judges of the time, while they acknowledged the perfect finishing of Polyclete's little soldier, yet spoke in much warmer terms of the colossos of Lyndius.

The great merit which I allow to this picture, makes it unnecessary that I should add it was Camillo Procacini that drew it. What pieces I have seen of the family, have set him with me very greatly above, not only his two brothers, Cæsar and Antonio, but even his father Ercole. The spirit that is exerted in this single picture would be alone sufficient to justify this determination; there appears at once a greatness and a happiness of invention in it, and more beauty in the disposition than I have seen in any thing left us by the family. I have heard Camillo censured for want of correctness in his designs, and think I have seen some pieces of his, otherwise good ones, that confess a slovenly carelessness in that particular; but there is nothing wanting in this piece. I have thought, on viewing some of this Camillo's paintings, that of all the masters he has most of that spirit and fire that approach in painting, to what is the sublime in writing: he indisputably had from nature that talent of thinking happily and greatly, to which Longinus gives the first place among the qualifications for arriving at that excellence; and I have often recollect ed what that just critic says of the inaccuracies of Demosthenes, and some

some others whom he allows most eminent in it, that they were owing to the authors being too much absorbed in thought of what was great, and too much attached to the sublime, to regard the lesser matter of accuracy : it seems thus with Procacini, for I shall always suppose the word Camillo understood when this is used singly, in regard to even his most unfinished pieces : the design is always great, if it want correctness ; and the spirit and invention scarce leave us opportunity to regard the want of lesser perfections.

There are some pieces in the church by very great masters. There is one in particular by Rubens, that I esteem among his capital performances : but even in the midst of the attention and applause you are bestowing on this, the Procacini does not lose any thing of that esteem and veneration, with which it affected you when you saw it without the disadvantage of such an object of comparison. While I am on the subject of paintings, give me leave to mention what others I have seen in this place, that have given me pleasure. I have found nothing of that profusion of fine pieces here, which people who have travelled tell us there is in the cities of Italy. I do not remember that I have been told Genoa has fewer than other places ; but this must either be the case, or the other accounts are pompous at the expence of truth. Though I do not allow the Genoese a number of fine paintings, I must acknowledge that they possess some very capital ones : the stoning of St. Stephen, in the church dedicated to that saint, is a glorious history, by Julio Romano. In the church of St. Francis there is a St. John Baptist baptizing Christ, a most finished piece, by Tintoret ; and in the Villa Imperiale there are

two of the most finished pieces I have seen, of Titian's.

The Villa Imperiale is at a mile's distance from the city, and has something in it different from all the other buildings : the front has nothing of that painting upon it, that renders the other public as well as private buildings so gaudy. It consists of a Doric and Corinthian row of pillars, and has something in its simplicity, that sets the ornaments of the rest in an ill light.

The grand piazza faces the church of the Annunciation, and not far from it you enter the strada Balbi, a long and narrow street, but full of very elegant buildings. The doge's palace is an extensive, but by no means an elegant building : it makes an ill figure, after the palaces of the nobility. The arsenal, they pretend, has arms for forty thousand men. I was pleased with some old armour they shew here ; it is of a particular make, and they say was wore by some Genoese ladies, who made a croisade, and signalized their courage in a very uncommon manner. By the by, they had great luck to do all this, and bring home their armour to hang up in remembrance. The church of St. Cyr, the Basilisk saint, is a very highly finished one ; it is extremely elegant within ; the pillars are all of the finest marble, and wrought up to the highest delicacy. The great hospital is an elegant and capacious building ; it is in a just taste, and there is a profusion of marble about it. It is ornamented with statues of the principal benefactors, and is said to be large enough to contain twelve thousand people. I have tired my hand. Genoa is so full

of curiosity, I must resume the pen after a day or two.

LETTER XXXVII.

I Have visited the palace of Balbi since I wrote to you. It gives name to the pompous street in which it stands. It is but the house of a private nobleman, but it shames most of the palaces I have seen in its furniture. One ought to spend a month in a single edifice of this kind. You will say I have imbibed the spirit of travelling with the Italian air: it is true, and every body will that tastes it. There are some Vandykes here, superior to any that we have to boast in England. There is a portrait of an old lady sitting in her chair, which, though it carry the marks of that great hand in every lineament, yet has throughout a spirit that shines in a very inferior light in all his other pictures. There is an Adoration by Titian, the finest piece of that great master that I have yet seen; shall I say more, that I expect to see? Several masterly pieces of Guercin are scattered over the apartments, and the Rubens and Raphaels are glorious to a degree that I can give you but a very faint idea of. I have spent two hours before a single picture, and when I left it, lamented that I could not pass as many days in studying its excellencies.

The palace of Durazzo, on the opposite side in the same street, gave me yet more matter of astonishment. Among the antiquities there, I contemplated with amazement a Roman empress as large as life, a most finished piece of sculpture.

There is also a bust of Vitellius, and a Bacchus, cut in marble, both very finished remains. The pictures are equal in value, and more in number than the busts. The very tapestry of many of the rooms, particularly that set in which the life of Moses is figured, and which was executed after a design, and a very noble one, of Raphael's, afford a pleasure greater than is had from many very celebrated pictures. There are pictures of the first rank from the most masterly hands; but particularly of a painter, whose true character I never was acquainted with before: three pieces by Luca Giordano in this palace, have given me as high a pleasure as I ever received from painting. I have always been able to distinguish the accomplished master in even the least considerable of his pieces; but it was not, I find, till after the first years of his working that he arrived at his full excellence. There are people, and those allowed the title of eminent ones too, in whom one of the greatest merits is the imitation of the manner of the masters; but it is otherwise in those who have the true Promethean fire of the art in them. In order to shew themselves to advantage, they must shake off all imitation, and all servile copying of manner. This has in none appeared more conspicuously, than in Giordano. We have some of his pieces in England, in which it has been always boasted by a noble possessor of them, that you may trace the pencils under which he studied: "In this, I have heard him say as he has shewn them to men of taste, you see the manner of his countryman Spagrolet; in that you find he had left Naples; there is all the grace of the Roman Cortona." This, in my opinion, is not the merit of those pieces, but their fault. His masters were both painters

painters of deserved repute; but under the first he was a boy; under the second he had not established any settled taste; and he buried his own talents, while his ambition was but to copy their excellencies. In his succeeding pieces, you see a new stile and character throughout; you see the effect of a severe study, and of a happy understanding of the remains of antiquity; you see the master forming his correctness upon these, but rising to a stile and manner purely his own.

It is singular, that so true a genius should beat pleasure the best mimic in the world: it is not only in his earlier pieces that we see this; in them it may have been study; it probably was so, and was his attempt at excellence; but in many other of his pictures, those that have been done at the best periods of his life, we find him playing with the stile of others. I have traced in many of them the peculiar manner of Guido, of the Basson's, of Tintoret, and Titian. Some of them are so like the works of those masters, that, I do not love to make mischief, but I am well assured that I could point out to you in the most capital English collections some Titian's, not to say as much of the others, that are incontestibly the sportings of Giordano's pencil.

The dying Seneca in the Bath, which we have viewed together with so much pleasure at Burleigh, is a copy from a most inimitable picture of Giordano's in this palace. They tell me the staircase in the Escorial deserves all the honours, and more than all the price, at which the king of Spain purchased this master's visit to his kingdom. Be that as it will, there are two other pieces here, the Martyrdom of St. Aquele, and the

the Contention between Perseus and Phineus, which will declare to all posterity, that the riches, the titles, the orders that were bestowed upon him, could not be more than his merit countenanced.

The furniture is not all that is to be admired in this Durazzo palace. The exterior of the duke of Doria's is indeed more pompous ; but the stair-case, and many other of the things within, are superior to every thing thing here in Genoa, and perhaps any where.

The church of Carignano is a modern and an elegant edifice : there are two excellent pieces in it ; a Martyrdom of some saint, by Carlo Morat, and a St. Francis, by Guercin. These are not the only paintings of account in it : but the splendor, even of the building itself, was eclipsed to me by the bridge over which I passed to it : this has the name of Il Ponte de Carignano, from its leading to the church, and is one of the noblest, as well as boldest modern undertakings I have seen. It joins two very steep rocks, over three or four arches ; but the design is great, and strikes one with a kind of awe and reverence.

Genoa must have been in being of very early time : the most correct writers call it the capital of the ancient Ligurians ; but by the trivial notice taken of it by the classical authors, it cannot have been of any great note. We find it was reduced to ashes by Mago the Carthaginian, in the second Punic war. The Romans afterwards rebuilt it. The Saracens levelled it with the ground again in the tenth century : and the French, of much later date, have done it no little

little mischief by a bombardment. What must have been the peculiar sanctity of our Lady of the Vineyards ? The people, who have the care of the church, preserve and shew to this time, a bomb that fell there without doing any mischief. What a miraculous pre-eminence, at a time when so many other sacred edifices were thrown down by the same sacrilegious machines !

The Genoese have been accounted liars from all antiquity ; and from the little I have seen among them I am apt to believe, that the malady is hereditary, and has been continued from generation to generation ever since. Genoa is not only the seat of falsities, but it has been the occasion of them in others. It is indeed a noble and an elegant city, but it has been represented as vastly more so. There is a great profusion of marble in all parts of it ; but it is by no means true, that it is all built of marble : travellers have said so, and have written so ; but it must be allowed, that the houses are of brick or stone. You have been told of the pensile gardens ; upon my credit I imagined I should have seen them like those of the Babylonian Semiramis : what will you say of these relaters of wonders, when I have informed you, that the gardens they have so lavishly ornamented in their descriptions, are in reality no more than a parcel of flower-pots set out in balconies, or of annual flowers growing in a shallow covering of earth spread over their floors. Such are the representations of things by those who describe them ; such are the things themselves, when we see them.

LETTER XXXVIII.

I Was in an ill-humour with the writers of travels, when I wrote to you my last letter from Genoa. I am as angry with them for having said too little of Pavia. There is indeed at present very little in it to command the attention; but it should not therefore be passed over with so little respect by those, who, if they knew their business, would find it as material a part of it to tell us what things were, as what they are. Pavia, whose castle is a heap of ruins, whose whole extent, except the single high street, is in a manner a scene of desolation, was once the metropolis of a kingdom, and the residence of powerful monarchs. If antiquity have a plea to our regard, Pavia claims it on that respect. The Tescio, which now flows by it, the Ticinus of the antients, gave it the name by which they knew it, Ticinum. Pliny, who mentions it as a place of consequence, gives the honour of its foundation to the Ligurians, and the Genoese at this time are not willing to forfeit the claim; but it seems to be on better authority referred to the Boian Gauls, the Cenomani, as authors call them. Attila, in the fifth century, reduced it to ashes; and Odacer, who pursued Orestes thither, left it in a second state of desolation. It fared little better in the dispute between Rodolph and Hugh of Arles, for the succession to the crown of Italy. There is no wonder that, after these severities, it made less figure than some happier cities. The downfall of the Lombard empire, of which it was the metropolis, has been a finishing stroke to its importance: and, as if even

even this were not enough, the disputes between the Guelfs and Gibbelins ; and since them, those between France and the Empire, have contributed to its compleat destruction.

We are not to wonder at a city sinking into very little, under such accumulated misfortunes. The Lombard kings made Pavia their residence for more than two hundred years ; for they so long governed Italy, they enriched it with palaces and public buildings : nor are the remains of these all that are to be seen of its antiquity. Near the church of St. Lawrence there are the ruins of a Circus, and an antient marble near it attributes it to Athalaric.

They led me to see a monument of an Englishman, in the convent of Augustine monks ; the inscription calls him Duke of Suffolk, and tells us that he fell in the battle of Pavia. The story mentions his having been driven out of England in the time of Henry the Eighth : the person therefore must have been Sir Richard de la Poole, brother to the Earl of Suffolk, who, in his exile, took up the long-forfeited title of Duke of Suffolk. In the same place there is a monument to the unfortunate Lionel Duke of Clarence, second son to Edward the Third, who visited this part of the world to marry a daughter of the Duke of Milan, and died soon after his arrival.

An equestrian statue of bronze, in the market-place, demanded my attention, and was the source of a great deal of entertainment of a very high kind to me ; a hundred people were immediately explaining it to me at once, and giving me its history. A very grave citizen told me its name

name was the Regisole; and that it was not the work of mortal hands; he assured me it was made for Theodorick the Great, and was done at his command by the magician who attended his court. A learned physician, who held his knowledge in contempt, though he countenanced his opinion, stepped in to tell me, that Regisole was but a corruption of its proper name Rex Solis, and that the magician erected it as an image of Odacer. What will be your opinion of the antiquarians of Pavia, when I have told you that this magic Regisole is a very noble remain of the antient statuary, and is an image of Marcus Aurelius? It was brought to Pavia from Ravenna; and, whether from the magic origin, or from whatever other cause, the inhabitants of Ravenna and of Pavia seem to have an equal, and both an enthusiastic veneration for it. They told me a story relating to it at my inn; which, however it may extol this veneration in the rival cities, gave me a very great idea of an obscure native of one of them. Cosmode Magna was the first man who scaled the walls of Pavia, when the French took it, 1529: the general, who saw the bravery of an obscure person distinguishing itself in so conspicuous a manner, bid him name what he would accept of as a reward. The fellow told him he was a native of Ravenna, and he demanded the Regisole: it had originally, he said, belonged to his city; and if he had deserved so much of his commander, he should wish to be the occasion of having that precious statue restored to the place of his nativity. The general consented; the statue was ordered to be removed; and the people of Ravenna were preparing to receive that and their warrior with all the marks of triumph: but the people of Pavia valuing it

as highly, deputed their whole senate to expostulate against the order, and to restore it to them. Good policy would not suffer the commander to refuse them. The soldier was rewarded with a mural crown of massy gold, and the statue was left in its place.

The statue is a fine one; but I was out of patience to see the heels of the Roman emperor decked with spurs of the present fashion; these, the bridle and the stirrups have been added by some wretched workman, as much unacquainted with history, as with his own profession.

The cathedral is an old, low, dark and disagreeable building, and has an odd look from its standing strangely awry. The colleges have not much to boast of in point of architecture. The citadel, I have been informed, was a very noble building. The French destroyed it in their second siege of Pavia. It was the work of Gallas Visconti. He has left such a testimony of his merit in the bridge at this town, one of the boldest and most striking to the eye in all this country of architecture, that it is easy to believe all that is said of the castle.

LETTER XXIX.

WHEN you see that I write from Milan, you will be eager to hear of the cathedral: it is indeed a glorious building; but there is something odd enough in it. It is an enormous pile of Gothic work, and it is all of marble. The front is unfinished; a very common circumstance, as I have observed already, in the Italian churches. Marble is so plentiful, and labour so cheap in this part of Italy, that a very inconsiderable sum, in proportion to the effect, would finish it. What is yet more provoking also is, that the church itself is rich enough to do it: the superfluous and unnecessary plate and jewels, would amount to three times the necessary sum: the very covering of the walls of St. Barromeo's vault would go a great way; it is of solid silver. But the churchmen must do it; and, beside the robbing these repositories, if the church were finished they would want a great pretence for begging legacies and benefactions. It is a shame that so glorious a pile should not be finished up to the architect's design, but it probably never will.

There is a vast profusion of brass and silver work within the church; but the eternal burning of the lamps has dinged both that, and even the walls on the inside, so that the whole has but a dirty appearance. To see the beauty of the materials, as well as of a great part of the work, you must look at the outside. Would you imagine it possible, that in and about one single church there should be more than eleven thousand statues? It is said of this of Milan; and if the terms

terms were a little altered, it would be true ; there are at least so many figures about it, taking in the attendants on the larger, and the several figures in all the bas-reliefs. There is a vast air of grandeur in many of the statues, which are larger than the life. There are several good ones, but particularly one of Agrati's, that excels most of the products of the modern chissel ; it is a St. Bartholomew ; he is dead, and the skin hangs over his shoulders. There is something horrible in the subject ; but one is much less shocked with it in the sculpture, than in any other representation. Dr. Mead, if I remember rightly, has a painting of this. We connect the ideas of horror and of blood together : the painter shocks us with keeping up to the colour. The face is, I think, more expressive in the statue than in any picture I have seen, and the muscles are described with a happy judgment ; but the white of the marble, if there be nothing more in it, takes off from the disgust with which we see the bleeding canvass. If there be any thing amiss in this excellent piece of workmanship, it is that the load of skin appears heavy and clumsy ; but when I make the objection, I do not know how it could have been avoided. You know the statuaries of all times have found even the draperies of their figures a load and encumbrance on them, though they are a happy part of the painter's imitation. When the antients cloathed their statues, it was in wet linnen, that fell close, and while it did not appear cumbersome, had the farther advantage of shewing the lineaments ; but even this they often avoided, and purchased neatness at the expence of propriety. The famous antique Laocoön is naked, though a priest, and in the act of performing a sacrifice ; a glaring impropriety ! But

the sculptor preferred being great in the whole, to the being accurate in a single circumstance.

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LETTER XL.

I was interrupted while I was last writing to you. I have since spent some more hours in viewing this metropolis of Lombardy. I am lost and confounded among the multiplicity of things that are worthy to be named to you. If every city in Italy abounds thus in matter of admiration, our tour should last our lives, my letters should be volumes.

I have seen a bas-relief of the antique, that excels every thing of its kind I have yet met with: it represents a dance of Bacchanals; and there are some other figures, particularly a Saturn, of inimitable elegance and expression. It is in the archbishop's gallery, and was originally in the Borghese collection.

I never knew how great a painter Titian was, till I saw the Christ crowned with thorns in this city: it is at the Santa Maria delle Grazie. The pieces we have of this great hand are so infinitely inferior to this, that they must have been done while he was young: there is a coldness and a jejune manner distinguishable in most of them: I thought them great when I saw them, but I remember them in another light now. There is a glow in the colouring of this picture, that sets every thing else at distance; and yet with all this force,

force, it is delicate and soft to a degree not to be described. The attitude of the figure has a grace and dignity that are more than mortal ; and the face carries, with all the other passions, a benevolence and humility that none could have combined with dignity and pain but Titian.

The antients themselves tell us, that when they viewed the statues of Phidias, they were amazed how it was that he, who had not any more than themselves seen those deities he figured, could arrive at such a knowledge of their form, and make them more than mortal in the expression. I never understood the compliment until I saw this picture; but certainly, though the whole figure is no more than of the human body, this Phidias of the painters has thrown into it something that is greatly more than mortal ; it is in the air, the manner, and the expression : but unless you to whom I write, and I who am writing; had both studied as Titian and as Phidias doubtless did, what was perfection, what was dignity, and what was even divinity, exclusively of all material forms, it is impossible that we should convey to one another an idea of this glorious piece : I grew enthusiastic as I looked upon it : it seemed to justify the Romish adoration. It is with justice indeed that they have called this Venetian the prince of the Lombard school ; but it is saying much too little.

De Vinci's famous piece of the last supper, is in a side chapel at this church. The faces of the two St. James's justify all that has been said in praise of them. They tell us that the painter left that of the principal figure unfinished, from a despair of excelling in it what he had done in these. The picture is on the solid wall, and that

face is now so much injured by the damp, that it is not easy to confirm or contradict the account.

It has been a custom to believe the pictures in the Ambrosian library of more consequence than the books : the opinion may be traced up to a distinguished English traveller, before whom we do not find it received ; after whom it has been universal. I do not join in it. The paintings strike the eye more obviously : the books are locked up in presses, and make no figure ; but when I had been at the pains of examining them, I was surprised at what I had heard. Cardinal Frederick Borromeo had taste as well as magnificence in his disposition : he ransacked all Europe, and a part of Asia, for the treasures he has deposited in this collection. The pictures are all fine ones ; but they are few : the manuscripts are almost innumerable. There is a Sophocles done in the eleventh century ; it is on silk, and the letters are gold ; and a Josephus, upon the Phillyra or Egyptian paper, computed to be twelve hundred years old : and the famous Leonardo da Vinci's mathematical manuscripts, for only one twelfth part of which our James the First is said to have offered three thousand Spanish pistoles. There are also two original letters of the Turkish emperor Bajazet ; they are in the Greek tongue, and are to two of the popes : they regard the care of a Turkish prince then at Rome, Gernes, who had escaped from his country, and who afterwards died at Gaeta, as it is supposed, by poison.

I was greatly struck with the account of a skeleton which they shewed me in a room adjoining to the library ; it is of a lady of the place,

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a celebrated beauty of her time, who left her bones as a *memento mori* to the other gay creatures of the place.

Among the pictures, concerning the particulars of which it is not necessary to say any thing by way of praise, since none but the most finished are admitted there; I saw two of Raphael's, a School of Athens, or Chiar oscuro, the original of the famous Fresco in the Vatican; and our Saviour washing the disciples feet. There is also a Magdalene of Titian's, and a head of himself. Bingham's elements make also a conspicuous figure here.

The facades of the churches of St. Mary and St. Paul here are glorious species of architecture: they are both after the designs of Hannibal Fontana: and the portico of St. Sigismund is also a master-piece of its kind; it is by Bromante.

All these are nothing however, in my eye, to the antique colonnade before St. Lawrence's: it has been the front of a temple, said to have been built to Apollo, and afterwards dedicated to Hercules: it consists of sixteen Corinthian pillars. There is at one end of it an inscription in honour of Lucius Caius, but there is nothing remarkable in it.

The confessional and the pulpit in St. Alexander's church are richly decorated: they are covered in a kind of vineering work with plates of polished stones; some of them very elegant and well chosen; the rest ordinary enough. The tabernacle of the church of St. Nazarine's also is extremely elegant. This was a gift of the Great Duke of Tuscany, and is, both in materials and

workmanship, a wonder in its kind. The pavement of the church is of African marble, and was laid at the expence of Sezena, the wife of Stilico: there is an inscription still preserved there that shews it.

The church of St. Stephen's, if it want some of the ornaments of the others, makes amends by a curiosity: against the inner wall of this edifice there is fixed a wheel of red marble, and over it, in large characters, *ROTA SANGUINIS FIDELIUM*. St. Ambrose, as they tell the story, came in just after a severe conflict had happened between the good Catholics and the Arians, in the place where the church now stands: the blood from the persons of both parties was running mixed together, and the good saint, grieved at the sight, prayed for a miracle to separate them: he was heard; the blood of the faithful separated itself from that of the heretics, and was drawn together into the hollow of a great round stone in the pavement. The stone they yet shew opposite to the wheel, and the fact is commemorated in a pompous Latin inscription, the conclusion of which is, *Tu memoriam venerare et miraculi vestigium adora.*

In the church of St. Ambrose there is a Pagan relic of superstition, and not a mean one: it is a serpent of brass of very good workmanship, and has been either meant for an Esculapius, or for a Mithras; or possibly it may be still older, and be an Egyptian Knuphis or Creph. Nothing is more known, than that the sun was worshipped under that form; and the Egyptians, we also know, worshipped their Creph under the same form, making the circular figure into which this creature

creature can throw itself, an emblem of eternity. However this be, the good catholics of Milan give the image a very different origin: they declare it to be the brazen serpent set up by Moses in the Desart; and as they have no serpents of whose bite to be cured by it, they on a certain day in Easter week bring all their children, whom they imagine to be troubled with worms, to be cured by looking on it. The figure is placed on a high column of marble, and the adoration in all respects is made to correspond to the form of the miracle in the Desart.

This is the famous church, into which the saint whose name it bears refused to admit the emperor Theodosius, after the massacre at which he connived in Theffalonica: the brazen gates which were shut against him on this occasion, are still shewn, and the name of the saint held in due honour for the bold exploit. The church itself stands low, but the reason of this is evident; it was the only edifice that was spared by Frederick Barbarossa, and the ruins of the old Milan which he burnt and destroyed, have raised the ground about it. There are some paintings and sculptures in it valuable for their antiquity, but miserably bad.

One thing which gave me at once pleasure and pain, was an examination of the four pillars on which the great altar is supported: they have evidently been made from two antient columns sawed asunder in the middle; they are of porphyry, and must have been very noble ones when entire. At some little distance from the church wall, there also stands a single antique pillar of
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the Corinthian order. This and the others are undoubtedly remains of some ancient building which once stood on this spot. It is said to have been a temple of Jupiter, but I do not know on what authority.

LETTER XLI.

WHEN shall I have done with Milan? I have seen more of it, but not yet all: I do not wonder at its being called Milan the Great: It is worthy to be the capital of a greater territory than the duchy of its name. They tell me it is more than ten miles in circumference: it is indeed one of the largest and finest cities I have seen. We conceive very imperfect ideas of these places from report. I do not think it is well fortified: it is surrounded with a wall indeed, in which are ten gates; but the extent is too great for a regular fortification. But what is wanting in the town itself, is made up in the citadel. This is a regular and a very strong building: it commands the whole city, and has, I believe, with justice, the credit of being the best fortress in Italy. The little river Olano, on which Milan stands, would answer but few of the purposes of a great town; but the situation recompenes, in some degree, the loss of a larger, as the town stands at once in one of the most pleasant and most fruitful plains of Italy; and the want of a navigable river running immediately through it,

is amply made up by two navigable canals, by means of which it has a communication with the Oder and the Tesin. The Town is well built: there are many open and large squares, and the streets are confined. The number of churches is not less than two hundred and thirty, and there are no less than ninety convents for men and women. When one recollects the number of useless people shut up in these, and the crowded inhabitants of those parts of the city where the tradesmen and artificers live, we shall not wonder to hear the number computed at between three and four hundred thousand.

You have seen the print of the St. George killing the Dragon, from a painting of Raphael's. The original is in Milan. It is preserved in the monastery of St. Victor. It is indisputably of the hand to which it is attributed; but it by no means came up to the expectations I had formed of so celebrated a piece. There is that dignity and force in it which particularise the manner of that inimitable master; but there wants that grace which is seen in many other of his pieces; and the colouring is not worthy the author of some pictures I have seen of his. The people who are possessed of it will not give way to any suspicion about it; but I am apt to believe it was one of his first pieces: there is in it all that strength of mind and genius that promised the excellencies which followed; but there is not the finished beauty of many others.

You remember the name of a Milanese, immortalized by Pliny, Quintus Novellius. They called him Tricongius, in memory of his drinking

ing three congi of wine in presence of Tiberius. What an exploit! His face is preserved in relief, with an inscription, near the Porta Nuova at Milan, while that of many a worthy man of his time rests in oblivion.

They used to have a famous statue on the gate, called Tosa, known also by the same name, and supposed to have given it to the gate. It was of a very elegant female figure, exposing herself naked, in a very extravagant and indecent manner. It stood there till their saint, Charles Borromeo, caused it to be taken down. The story is, that it commemorated a lady of singular beauty, who at the time when Frederick Barbarossa besieged the city, exposed herself naked on one of the gates in this posture, to engage the attention of the besiegers, while the garrison made a furious sally from another part. The story says the attempt was crowned with great success. The statue is still in being: it is preserved in a palace of the noble family of Archinte. But it is not easy for a stranger to obtain a sight of it.

L E T .

LETTER XLII.

I Have been extremely entertained with the story of a Romish saint. You know they are a set of beings I have always held in great veneration. The last thing I was led to see in Milan, was St. Guglielmina's vault. I had not heard the story, nor is it a wonder travellers are not informed of it; I only stare to think that I have been let into the mystery of these mysteries.

The vault into which I was led, under the name of the La Guglielmina, was about four centuries ago the retirement of the saint from whom it is named. She was a lady of exemplary piety, (so says the story) who after having expended a vast fortune in acts of charity and public endowments, shut herself up in this dark, but not uncomfortable mansion. It was her rule never to be disturbed while at her devotions, whether she performed them alone, or in company with those whom she admitted to the honour of her friendship. The gates were opened to none at that time; and partly the strength of them, and partly the awe and veneration for the inhabitant, rendered them impregnable. It would have been accounted sacrilege but to have disturbed the pious recluse with a signal to ask admittance, or an attempt to peep or to listen to what passed within, both which were indeed, from the nature of the place, impossible, could any have dared to attempt it. At the regular times the gate was shut, and the devotions sometimes continued many hours. At first the times had been irregular, and often the door was fastened at mid-

mid-day; but the faint being too much reverenced, people used to crowd at a distance about the portal to have the benefit of her prayers; and she had many solicitations, from those of pious dispositions, for leave to join her in them. The love of doing good, and the hate of ostentation, occasioned her at last to make midnight the only time for her great acts of devotion, and invite a few of those who solicited it, to the honour of joining in them. The door was usually kept fast for two or three hours, and the people who were honoured with her instructions were then let out; not in a body, but one after another, as each was to receive her last instructions at their dismission.

It was a rule with the pious recluse, to admit only youth, that she might have the opportunity of innocent and undebauched minds to receive her precepts; and that none might out of envy misrepresent, those who were admitted came all in veils; and it was an act of irreligion for any to attend them home, or to watch with design to know who they were.

The families only of those who were admitted to the honour, knew of it, and they were daily edified at second hand with the sermons of the good old lady. At length the inhabitant of the venerated cave died, and was added to the number of the saints: the sacred honours were paid to her remains; and her disciples obtained permission, that they might be deposited in the very cave where she had been used to breathe forth her divine admonitions. The request was granted, and the corps deposited with signal honours. All Milan venerated the name: but her disciples, consisting of a number of young persons of both sexes,

sexes, used to assemble at the usual hours, to reverence her ashes, to repeat their devotions, and to commune with one another concerning the things which she had in her life-time been used to say to them. None were admitted to these rites, but those who had attended the living saint, nor was it ever attempted by the select body to add one to their number.

The ceremony had continued some months; The people who resorted to the cave were held in veneration by the whole church; the corps preserved itself in a supernatural manner, and miracles were wrought by it. There were thoughts of building a chapel over the vault. While this was in agitation, a young citizen of Milan married one of the select body. She was charming beyond most of the Milanese women of her time: they mutually loved; they were happy a long time; I think the story says four months. At length the husband, whose fondness increased upon the possession of such a jewel, became impatient under the hours, which her devotion at the cave of the saint nightly stole from his bed. He solicited to be admitted of the number, but he solicited in vain; not his want of piety, but the strict order forbade it. If any could have been added to the number, her dear husband must have been the man. She proposed it at the next meeting; every body, she told him, wished it, but the saint had left with none the power of doing it. The good man submitted; but submission upon force is but an ill thing. He grew eager to know what was the secret rite; perhaps he grew suspicious. The lady had left him about bed-time, to join some more of the party who were to go together to

the cell. She had left one of her veils behind her: the husband put it on; went boldly to the door, knocked, and was admitted. Happily he was the first there: he concealed himself in an obscure corner of the vault; he saw them enter in companies; he saw the last admitted; he saw the person who kept the gate dismissed; and then he saw the rites begin.

The eye of man never was witness to such a scene of lewdness and varied debauchery. The good man saw every act of shame committed by them in presence of one another. It was not worth while to prevent his wife's prostitution one night. Added to the many she had enjoyed, it was of no consequence. He saw her successively the mistress of two of the male devotees. He was obliged to stay the ceremony out. It was easy for him to escape among the first crowd, in the confusion of going out, as soon as they had broke up. He was at home before his wife: he heard her repeat the ejaculations and prayers of the whole body with christian edification, and he was quiet till the morning. As soon as he was dressed, he applied to a magistrate; his oath was received; the circumstances were too strong to admit a doubt. The people, as many of them as were known, were apprehended; the husband got rid of his pious wife, and the body of St. Guglielmina was burnt by the common hangman.

L E T.

LETTER XLIII.

PEACE to the ashes of good St. Guglielmina: I have left the place where they were scattered into the air, and am arrived at Brescia. This part of Italy is rather a great garden than an open country: the sun, the sky, the air, every thing contributes with the elegance and pomp of the objects that are about one, to set one as it were in a new world. You will not easily conceive, how much I congratulate myself on having had the resolution to enter on the tour. But I must tell you of Brescia. It is a capital of a territory, and a sweet city; but in extent it is nothing in comparison of that I have left behind me. They acknowledge, that it is not above two miles and a half in circumference; and from a view taken at no great distance, it appears much less. It is compactly built, and stands just at the foot of a mountain. One sees the whole at a view, and it is a charming prospect. The rivers Mela and Gazzo water it. There is an arm of one or other of them trickling down every one of the principal streets. It has been a place of some standing; but the factions of the Guelphs and Gibbelins had nearly destroyed it. It has been since repaired, and in a great measure rebuilt. It is now one of the prettiest and most flourishing towns in the Venetian territory. The houses are regular and well built. There are a great many squares, and they are tolerably large and open. The public buildings are not numerous, but what there are are handsome. Among these, the principal is the citadel; it is a modern fortress, and a very strong one.

Brescia

Brescia is a town of antiquity. The Romans call it Brixia; and Catullus mentions it under the name of the Mother of Verona. It is said to have been built by the Cenomani, the second body of Gauls that passed the Alps under Elitonus: but there is little in it to speak in favour of its antiquity. One thing however is worth remarking, as it shews how very long the same species of manufacture will remain in the same place: the Brescians are at this time the best smiths in Italy, and particularly excellent in the fabrication of arms. It appears from some of the ancient inscriptions preserved in the town, that they were so in the time of the Romans. There is express mention in one of them of the *Collegia centoniarum fabrorum.*

The city laments the loss of a statue to an unknown deity. I have seen a figure of it, and a copy of the inscription, that are preserved, and there is something in them very singular. The statue is in another place; and the Brescians now think it a lasting scandal to their city to have parted with it. It was dug at Brescia many years since, and was of excellent workmanship. It represented a venerable man with great dignity, as well as solemnity of aspect, habited in a Phrygian dress, and standing in an easy posture, with an owl at his feet. The inscription consists of only two words, *Deo Noctylio.* It must have been an unique. Nothing of the kind is met with in the collections of the virtuosi, nor in the works of the antiquarians. I am not ignorant, that Bacchus was sometimes called Noctilius; but this cannot be of that deity, the face, as well as the whole air and aspect, are against it; nor are there any

of

of the symbols of that deity about it. Cybele had a kind of orgies instituted to her : they were called Nyctillia sacra. Atys, the chief priest of this divinity, was always represented as a grave and reverend old man. The symbol agrees ; and though there is not so much as one might wish, to countenance the conjecture of its being his, there is nothing against it.

The church of St. Lazaro makes no figure, after some that I have found occasion to name to you in the course of my tour. What then will it appear to me, in comparison of some of those which I yet have to see ! But with all this disadvantage, there is in it an air of magnificence, as well as elegance, that now pleases me greatly. It is a sort of relief, to the mind that has been exercised in contemplating vast objects and scenes of a painful admiration, to fall to these which, though they want the magnificence of those enormous objects, have yet their merit, and please, though they do not astonish. It were injustice, with St. Lazaro not to mention St. Afra. Both of them have also their beauties within. In the first there are some very fine pieces of Titian's. In the St. Afra there is a standard by Paul Veronese, a most amazingly fine thing in its kind. There is also a piece of Tintoret's, a Transfiguration, equal to any thing I have seen from the same pencil. There is a rarity in the cathedral which I do not well know what to make of. They have a strange imperfect way of shewing these famous curiosities in these places : a stranger never gets a perfect view of them. I am always apt to suspect, that there is reason for this caution : the good fathers are not so much afraid of

having their treasures stolen, as some fallacy or other about them discovered. The pretended emerald dish, that I named to you in a former letter, is kept under thirteen locks, the keys of which are in the hands of so many different people, all of the first consequence. It is difficult, from this circumstance, for a stranger to obtain a sight of it; and when he does, it is so blockaded and defended, that it is hardly possible to say whether it be round or square, or whether made of stone or brass. Something like all this parade there is in regard to the relique in the cathedral of Brescia: it is not indeed kept under so many different locks, but it is as hard to get a distant view of it. It is a cross: the colour is blue: the matter of which it is made, they say, is unknown. My eager friend M—s told them, he would lay them a hundred pound to six-pence that if they would give him a good sight of it, he would tell them what were the materials: but we paid for this forwardness, by obtaining but a more imperfect view of it than we otherwise probably should have had. That it belonged to Constantine, they agree on all hands. Some will have it to have been his labarus; the priests assert it to be his famous oriflamme: but this is a conjecture very ill supported.

There is a great deal in Brescia that pleased me. The governor's palace is a handsome edifice: the palace of justice is also a large, and not inelegant building; and there is something in the portico which faces it, that has a pleasing effect: it is not less than a quarter of a mile in extent, and is all occupied by gunsmiths, in their distinct shops and apartments. The iron mines that supply

ply these works, (for they begin from the ore, and carry on their works to the highest perfection) are in the mountains to the north of the city. These hills, as is always the case where there are mines, produce scarce any vegetable.

My friend M—s had like to have got into a very unlucky scrape here. It was what I should least of all men have suspected him of; and it was a strange chance that I was in the way to relieve him. You will not wonder that his curiosity led him to wish for a sight of the iron mines; but you will stare to hear of the guide he chose to conduct him to them. We had hardly seen the face of a woman since we were in Italy, till we came into Brescia. I was surprised to see them appear in this city in the streets, and with caps as they do with us. My very grave friend M—s had met with one of the lower class, in a ramble toward evening, and had agreed with her to attend him the next day, while her husband was at his work, to the foot of the mountain, and direct him in his way to the mines. The husband (for the Brescians, though they allow their wives more liberty, are not less jealous than the rest of the Italians) suspected the matter; he dogged his spouse to her gallant; he followed them together out of the town; and, had not I been accidentally up early, and walking to enjoy the cool air north of the town, the adventure would have had a very melancholy termination. I hastened toward the corner of a field where I saw three people in very earnest discourse, and could perceive that mischief was on foot, by the woman's getting between the two men, and more than once throwing herself upon her knees. You

will guess my surprise, on seeing my friend and companion the object of the resentment from the enraged quarter. However much of Vulcan there might be in the husband, there was very little of Mars in the gallant. The Venus was a suppliant; but her intreaties only enraged her spouse the more. He was on the point of executing the delinquent with a kind of iron punch they use to strike holes through the red hot metal, when I came up. He desired me, in coarse Italian, not to interfere against the revenge of an injured husband, and expected I would be Italian enough to pass on and leave him to his pleasure. I do not know whether it was my rhetoric that prevailed, or the more powerful consideration of our being two to one; but with much ado I made up the breach. Mathews asserted his innocence of any design against the lady's honour; but he did it in so awkward a manner, that I much suspect him. However, for a small sum the Italian promised him forgiveness, and they parted friends.

L E T -

LETTER XLIV.

If you could have seen the face of M—s, my dear —, when I found him under the hands of his enraged adversary, you would have thought there required little rhetoric to prevail with him to follow my advice of instantly quitting the place. But there is a principle in the mind of man, at least there is so in the mind of a philosopher, which is superior to fear : it is curiosity. It was in vain that I urged the Italian jealousy ; in vain I pleaded the insidious temper of the husbands in this country ; in vain I represented to him how very little was to be expected from a reconciliation on force. Nothing would prevail with him to leave the place till he had visited the mines.

When I could not get him back, there was no step for me but following him forward. Indeed he had reason to be earnest in his desire of seeing them : the scene has something horrible in it, but I shall never forget the pleasure it gave me. I am becoming as eager a naturalist as my friend, and think I could climb rocks and descend into caverns with as much readiness, if I knew as well where to meet with the things I searched for, as my companion could.

I had thought there was something singular in the stone of several of the buildings in Brescia ; that of the town-house in particular was of so uncommon an aspect, that I had at first supposed the building to be of marble. We here met with the quarries from which those materials had

been dug ; and on seeing some fresh broken pieces from the pits, I was yet more pleased with the colouring. It is a very hard stone : the ground colour is blue, and there are large blotches of red and black, and a shining silver-like white in it. They seem distinct matter from the rest of the stone, and have an appearance of having been thrown into the blue matter at a time when it was soft like paste. They have greatly the appearance of some coarse kinds of granite that I have seen ; and if the workmen tell me truth about their hardness, are not vastly inferior to this elegant stone in that respect. I am confident they would make a figure that few here suspect, under the advantage of a high polish. The quarry of these does not consist of one vast bed of solid matter, as is the case in most other stone, as well as in the several kinds of marble ; but the stones lie in vast lumps, some of them of several ton weight, in a confused manner one over another.

The heaps of this stone are at the foot of the mountains ; and the workmen observe, that the bed of them runs with great regularity, and to a vast extent ; for wherever they open the earth in that situation, they are sure to find them. This is the reason that there is not any large quarry opened any where ; but wherever there has been a building designed with them, the side of the hill has been searched at a due height, as near the place as might be, and they are always found in the same abundance. As we ascended the mountains, which are tolerably high ones, the appearance was miserably barren and disgusting. Here was nothing of that verdure which had delighted the eye in the lower ground ; nothing of the fruit

fruit trees, or painted flowers, that sprung up at the foot of the declivity, and even to the stone quarries ; all above us was rude rocks, and but here and there on either hand could we distinguish a barren piece of pasturage ; no ploughed land, nor the appearance of a vine any where about us. We climbed the ascent, sometimes considerably steep, by the help of rude masses of stone, and coarse and unprofitable lumps of ore, that had been thrown from time to time out at the mouth of a mine that was above us, and had rolled to a greater or less distance down the hill. In our way up, we passed by some vaulted cliffs of a black stone, which standing the weather better than the looser matter of the hill, projected to some distance beyond the swell of its sides. On breaking some fragments from these, M—'s declared them to be beds of a fine black marble. We who have only been used to see marble as wrought and polished, do not imagine how coarse a figure it makes in the ground. The wonder is, what could have tempted men to try the effect of polishing upon it. I almost laughed at my friend's assertion about a ruce and dirty-looking stone as I had seen ; but when we afterwards returned to our quarters, I found he was right. He would have claimed some merit with the town, for informing them of a quarry of marble in their territory, but we found they already knew of it, and that most of the marble of that colour, which we saw in the churches, was from this place.

After a very painful ascent, we at length came to the mouth of the mine to which we had been directed. We were received by a natural cleft of a red rock, into a strange kind of dungeon : we descended perpendicularly to a monstrous

depth, by means of a machine contrived to let down the workmen and to bring up the ore. We pursued our course after this along a narrow passage ; sometimes all at length ; in the best places stooping almost double. I was thoroughly tired : I heartily wished myself out ; but indeed in the end I found the object of our search worth the pains we had been at in getting to it. We were received into a vast cavity, in which the miners were then at work. They had for many years pursued the vein of ore through a natural crack in the rocks, which it filled up, and which was the course that we had followed in our way to this place. They were now arrived at what they called the body of the mine. They had long been at work upon it, and they expected it to last much longer. The ore here lay on every hand about them : they had only to loosen it with a kind of little picks, and to send it up. It was extremely rich, and lay about in an infinite variety of figures. You will not wonder, after this account, to hear that the mines never were in so flourishing a situation as at present.

The cavity in which we now found ourselves, resembled a large hall ; it was more than eighty feet in length, and twenty-five in breadth. Its height indeed was not exactly proportioned, according to the rules of architecture ; it was in general but about seven foot, but occasionally it rose into a kind of domes of a wonderfully beautiful appearance, the work of nature. The miners had left columns of the natural stone at certain distances, to support the roof from falling in upon them, and were now at work on one of the extreme corners.

Remote

Remote as this strange cavern is from the region of day, and out of all communication with the general light, a very small source afforded a sufficient quantity of it. The diggers work by a small kind of wax candle, not thicker than that which we see in England twisted up in rolls, and one of these gave a great light to all that part of the cave where it burned. There were about half a dozen others of the same size stuck up against the pillars that supported the roof, in order to shew us the place ; and the vast room was more illuminated by these little flames, than I have seen a church of half its extent with half a dozen lustres. The lowness of the roof, and the bright surface of the stones and rocks on all parts, I doubt not, conspire in some measure to this ; but doubtless the eye itself has its share in the delusion, and the perfect darkness out of which it is received into this new scene, contributes not a little to the giving it an appearance of more brightness than it really has.

The first observation that my friend M—s led me to make, was that of the various mouths of other veins which opened into this great reservoir in several parts. He led me round the sides of the cavity, and shewed me these in form of wide cracks in the solid rock, all full of the ore, and reaching, some perpendicularly, others obliquely, from the roof to the floor of it. These, he told me, were so many veins of the ore, and might each have been traced as a mine, and worked to advantage. He expressed himself with great surprise, in regard to this vast cavern full of it, and spoke of it as a thing he had not seen, nor scarce could have believed, if it had been

been represented to him. To me it had the appearance of a vast lake, into which the several streams of ore emptied themselves.

When he had painted out to me the many kinds of the ore, as it lay in the crevices of the rock, and explained which was hardest to work, which fullest of metal, and demonstrated why each had this peculiar character; he led me to the center of the cavern. Now you have seen the usual and natural state of the ore, you shall see from hence, said he, the several accidental forms it assumes, which I never before beheld in such perfection. He pointed first of all to a part of the roof between two columns, that stood near us; he shewed me the marks of the tools in several places, in order to prove that the surface was not natural, but artificial: it was all, you may be assured, said he, left naked by the workmen, but you shall see how nature has ornamented and enriched it since. It was plain that what he alledged was the fact; the whole cavity in which we were had once been full of ore, and the very rock of which the roof was formed, so rich in the metal, that they had cut away a great deal of it. The parts of it that were naked, retained the marks of the tools; but in others, we had a most beautiful prospect of nature's operations. You have seen the icicles hanging from the eaves of a house, after a night of frost coming upon rain; but these are poor resemblances: there hanging from the solid rock a number of cylinders and cones of almost pure iron. They were from the thickness of a straw to that of one's wrist, and some of them a foot in length. They hung perpendicularly from the top, and their surface was bright and glossy, as that of the highest polished

lished steel. When we broke them, we found them composed of a number of crusts laid one over another, and all these striated as fine as it was possible for the eye to discern.

In another part of the roof hung down, not single icicles in the manner of these, but large clusters of a coarser kind. These to me resembled the pipes of an organ in miniature. The workmen suppose them like brooms for sweeping, and call this kind of ore by a name expressing that. The sides of the columns were also incrusted with some less regular pieces of these; and the miners told us, they also, like the rest, were extremely rich in the metal. They were always wet, as were also the first kind. Water occasionally dropped from them upon the floor; and wherever it did so, little lumps or upright pieces of the same matter were formed, and hurt our feet in walking. Every drop of water that pervades these rocks, is full of particles of iron. M—s carries it farther; he says every vapour that rises from below has also iron in it, and that condensing into water on the cold roof and walls of this cavern, it leaves the metal behind it as it drops down, or at the utmost, before it sinks into the floor.

In another part of the cavern we saw a multitude of round bodies like large shot, and some of the size of pistol bullets; I supposed these had been formed by art; but M—s, by breaking two or three of them, convinced me that they were also the work of nature. On the columns that were left to support the roof, as also in some parts of the side walls, there appeared parts that were so bright and glittering, the eye could hardly

hardly bear to look on them : they had the grain of the finest steel when just broken, only brighter. In another place, a huge cluster of globules of a glossy grey or bright red, resembled so many bunches of grapes : these were the hæmatite, so famous for the eyes. In another, a vast lump splitting all the way in fibres. Between these we saw vast lumps of purer ore, like common iron ; and yet larger, of a bright red kind, so soft, that it rubbed off between the fingers, and stained them almost indelibly. This was smoother than it is possible to describe, to the touch, and its colour elegant in the highest degree.

M——'s had shewn me occasionally some of the vast stones, hollow, and their cavities filled up with a bright white matter like crystal, only milky. He now led me to an obscure corner, on which his eye had been fixed the whole time, and in which there stood what appeared to me a very large and a very branched shrub of white coral. On examining it nearer, I was astonished to find it, not of vegetable, but of mineral origin. M——'s shewed me the part of the rock from whence it shot, and convinced me that its matter was the same with that of the milky crystal in the hollow pieces of the ore ; it even grew from such a mass. It was by much the beauifullest thing I have seen. I would have purchased it at any price ; but it was reserved for the archbishop, a man of curiosity, who had heard of it. They called it by a name expressing flower of iron.

As we returned, I was in somewhat better humour with the place, and had the patience to hear M——'s descant on the objects we passed in our course to the ascent. He shewed me in our way

way a great number of smaller shoots and efflorescences of the same white snowy matter. But what surprised me most, was to see all the common crystal that we met with, not shooting into sprigs and columns, as is usual, but all in clusters of a kind of diamonds. The single shoots were about the size, and very much of the shape, of a diamond at cards. Some of them were perfectly pellucid, and very bright; but the greater part were tinged to the same milky hue with the shoots. It is the first subterranean visit I have made; but had you made it, my dear —, in spite of all its dirt and danger it would not be your last.

* * *

LETTER XLV.

VERONA gave me but little promise as I entered it; but I am far from dissatisfied with the time I have spent in looking over its curiosities and antiquities. The traveller of any degree of observation, is twice deceived in this town. As he approaches it, the first views give him great expectations, which are not answered on a nearer prospect; and as he observes the general face of it on entering it, he does not expect the objects of admiration which he afterwards finds.

Verona is a town of considerable extent. Its circumference cannot be less than seven miles, and it is sweetly situated. It stands partly on a hill, and partly on the plain at its foot; and the Adige, a very considerable river, runs through it.

it. This we see from a distance. When we come up to it, we find the buildings irregular. The houses are in general low and mean, and the streets are dirty and very ill paved. I should not omit to tell you, that in my way to it I was quarrelling with my geography, for not informing me that we approached the sea again between the town of Brescia and this place: indeed I knew not how the sea should get thither. What I saw was the Lago de Garda, the Benacus of the ancients. You will not wonder at my mistaking for the sea a body of water of between thirty and forty miles in length, and twelve in breadth. It was as rough as the sea, and had all its appearances.

There is a strange face of idleness at Verona, and of its consequence, poverty. I am less in humour with the generality of the people here, than with any I have seen in Italy. It has been an antient town, but from its earlier periods has been vastly enlarged. The old gates, and a part of the wall that at that time inclosed it, now stand almost in the middle of the city. It has had its revolutions, and seems now declining into that state again, from which the later ages raised it.

Nothing surprised me more in the examination of the severals parts of Verona, than seeing the Adige run through the middle of it. The two distinct parts into which this river now divides the town, have communication by four very good bridges: but these are not of very early date, nor indeed is it possible they should; for the river must have once run, not through the middle of the town, as it now does, but on one side of it.

it. It is evident from all accounts, that the Adige did indeed run to the right of Verona. Silius Italicus tells us of its surrounding the town; and we find in Aurelius Victor, and the panegyrist of Constantine, that in his passage from Piemont, he was obliged to pass the Adige before he could take Verona. It has been imagined by those who have the easiest way of reconciling contradictions, that the town has altered its situation; but this is not the case: certainly it is not the city, but the river, that has undergone the change. I have searched the place where the old course of the river must have been, supposing the town to have always stood where it now does, and I have found it there. I have traced part of the old bed to the right of the town, and even discovered the remains of an old bridge there, in a place where there are now only houses. The Italian historians explain it all: they tell us, that no earlier than in the sixth century the course of the Adige was altered by an extraordinary land flood. They are regular in telling us, that it rose to such a height, particularly about St. Zeno's convent, that it threw down the walls of the city. It was at this time that it made its way along the center of the city, overthrowing multitudes of private, and some public buildings; and the current tore up a bed for itself, that the river has kept ever since.

I have told you, that under all the disadvantages in appearance, Verona has amply satisfied my thirst of information in travelling. The public buildings, which are not thinly scattered in it, are as remarkably august and elegant, as the private ones are mean and contemptible. The paintings preserved in it are many, and the greater part

part of them of the most capital kind : and the remains of Roman magnificence no where more amply display themselves.

* * *

L E T T E R XLVI.

I Was ashamed to begin a description of the amphitheatre at Verona at the end of a letter. It is the noblest remain of Roman greatness that I have any where seen ; and though of very early origin, is by the help of a few slight repairs, at this time very perfect. It is impossible to fix the date of this building ; we can only say, that Verona was very early in the Roman empire a place of great importance and estimation. We find that in the reign of Otho and Vitellius, public sports were exhibited in Italy ; and we have no reason to suppose a town of such inferior note as Placentia should have an amphitheatre, when Verona wanted one. But not to dwell upon mere conjecture from circumstances, Pliny's last epistle of his sixth book assures us, that public games were at that time exhibited at Verona, that is, in Trajan's reign. Nor can we suppose they wanted an amphitheatre earlier. Maximian built, as we are informed, amphitheatres at Milan, Aquillia and Brescia ; and for that reason probably, for there does not appear to have been any other for it, Sigenius attributes this to him. It is indisputably of much earlier date, unquestionably prior to the time of Trajan, but how much earlier, it is not to be determined.

Nothing

Nothing can give one a greater idea of the magnificence of this people, than the plan, materials and execution of this immense pile: The outer wall appears to have been a rustic work of entire marble. Part of it is yet entire, and shews that the whole was raised in the manner of an attick, twenty foot higher than the uppermost row of arches. The windows in this part, were in no smaller a number than seventy-two: they were square and large. These served to let in light and air to the spectators, when the sun was too powerful from above. On these occasions they extended a veil of silk, dyed with purple or some other rich and glowing colour, over the whole top, and supported it by a very erect pole, like the mast of a ship, or one of our may-poles, fixed in the center of the area. The hole is yet visible in the center of this floor, where the mast was originally placed.

The seats are capacious beyond all imagination of those who have not seen them. I remember we allowed nine inches to every person in the scaffoldings erected for seeing the royal fireworks: if we account in the same manner for the spectators at these shews, (and the Roman dress did not take up more room than ours) there would have held near fifty thousand persons. What an assembly! And yet they were often filled.

To what vile uses may the greatest things return? The area, where a whole people were once entertained with what must have been allowed august and great, tho' brutal and horrible shews, serves for a parcel of tumblers and mountebanks

to divert the mob at a mean price ; and the two lower stories of the building are converted into stables, hay-lofts, and warehouses for bulky goods of little price.

The Porta Bursarea, is another noble remain of antiquity in the city of Verona. It consists of two stories, formed of arches of the Corinthian order : but this is less pure than the former august pile. There are evidently some of the ornaments greatly inferior to the rest of the building ; and though an inscription calls it a work of Gallien's, it is certainly much older : it is in too noble a taste to have been of his age. Gallien walled the city, and did many other considerable favours to Verona ; and there seems to be an instance of their generosity and gratitude in this edifice. It was undoubtedly at that time a celebrated remain of an earlier period, and in compliment to their benefactor was removed to a new place, decorated in the best manner they were able, (a manner vastly inferior to the rest) and inscribed to him. When we recollect Constantine's arch at Rome, compiled from parts of Trajan's forum, we are not to wonder that the seeming works of the later æra of the empire, often, in reality, belong to the earlier.

One of the gates of Verona is another very noble remain of the early Roman splendor. It is an arch, a very finished one, of the Doric order. I have been in a strain of admiring the Gothic buildings in France, but I shall acquire a truer taste in Italy. There is a nobleness and elegance in the simplicity of this arch, that puts all ornament out of countenance. It was probably erected in honour of Æmilius, who in con-

cert with Flaminius put an end to the Insubrian war, and who brought the noble causeway through Bologna, Modena, Parma, Milan, Brescia, and their city.

The Areus Leonum is another glorious ruin ; but it is now so perfectly decayed, that it is not easy to see much of what was once its grandeur. There are the remains of an inscription on it, which, when legible, we are told, mentioned one Flavius, of Vespasian's family ; but not a letter of it is now in being.

If Verona is rendered famous by these remains of earliest time, there is yet another circumstance, in which no city of Italy excels it ; the collection of antique inscriptions. These are ranged in an elegant order round the walls of their great court, before the academy ; and if we except only the Arundel marbles, are the greatest collection in Europe. They have been procured at a vast expence, from every place where the Venetians had power, and have been methodized by count Scipio Maffei, who has executed his part so well, as to do a lasting honour to his country, confer an obligation of the first importance on the literati of all parts of the world, and immortalize his own name. It were endless to transcribe these, nor is it necessary ; Gruter has done it already.

One's sentiments, in regard to what is beautiful, change very often in the course of a few observations, when the objects of them are different, and are elegant in their kind. You saw me just now in love with the Doric arch to such a degree, as to condemn myself for having been pleased with any thing in the Gothic style : I am

now in humour again with that rude exuberant taste. I have seen the tomb of C. Scaliger, lord of Verona : it is in the church-yard of St. Proculus. It stands on six massy pillars, fixed upon a solid foundation, and is carried to a vast height with a profusion of ornaments of the cathedral kind. On the summit is a figure of the lord who is interred in it, on horseback. The body is in a stone chest, not under, but at the top of the edifice. The horse stands upon it.

LETTER XLVII.

THE Moscardo cabinet has been celebrated by all who have written of it. You have read all who have written of Verona, and I shall not repeat to you what you know. Give me leave to mention to you, however, a circumstance overlooked by all who have taken notice of that valuable collection, and misunderstood by most who have visited it. Among a vast number of curiosities of all kinds, we were shewn a great number of stones of different sorts and of different figures, but all having an appearance of some kind of weapons : some of them resembled the heads of arrows ; some the points of javelins ; some knives, and others axes. They were rudely formed, plainly not done by cutting, as in our time, but by chipping.

Many people were examining these at the same time that we were favoured with a sight of them, and many conjectures were made concerning them,

them ; but a person of a grave aspect, and much erudition, claimed the attention of every body at length, for what he offered on the subject. He asserted, that they were not the work of any mortal hands, but that they had fallen from the clouds. He called them brontæ and ceraunia ; and in support of his opinion, produced Boetius, de Boot, and several other writers of credit ; in whom he shewed not only accounts of the several kinds under these names, but even figures engraved, which so exactly and perfectly represented some of these, that it was impossible not to suspect that they had been made from them. These, he told us, were the things we often heard of, but had not seen before ; these were the true and real thunderbolts. He produced instances in great number of the mischiefs that had been done by them in their fall, and read to us the passages in his several authors, which mention their having been found in America as well as Europe ; and very judiciously concluded, that things of this kind could not be so universal, if not of this origin.

M—s, whom I had observed biting his lips and reddening with contempt and indignation all the while he was speaking, as soon as this pompous harangue was finished, began another. "Men, says he in his laconic way, have always delighted in knocking one another on the head. There have been battles, where swords and guns were never heard of. The wild Indians at this time, and the wild Germans and others long ago, would not be without weapons, though they had not the knowledge of metals : they hacked and hewed these things out of stone ; they cut one flint with another till they brought it into some sort of

form: these, you see are not very handsome, but they would do to kill one another with. You say they were made above stairs, I think, Sir, continued he tauntingly: pray where are the quarries? are they in the clouds too? And, methinks, you make the aerial beings very clumsy workmen. Look you here, says he, shewing an arrow head, here are all the hollows of the chipping, and here is the place where it was tied to the shaft: this other is but an awkward ax, it is true, continues he; but here is the place for the handle of it. Pray, Sir, is it your opinion they came down shafts and handles and all; or did those who made them take all this pains to no purpose? Your writers are a parcel of antiquated scribblers; superstitious people, who made miracles of every thing they did not understand. People have known better since."

There was too much reason in what my friend advanced, to leave any place for answere to his antagonist; and this was a seconde instance, in which he got great credit. One blushes to see what absurd opinions have at one time or other, not only been received by the common people, but countenanced by men of learning, and, in other respects, of knowledge. We say in England, any thing may be proved by evidence; I believe it were as just to say of the world in general, that any thing may be proved by the best authorities. There is nothing so false, but people will be hired to swear it; there is nothing so absurd, but people have been led by credulity to believe it.

LETTER XLVIII.

I Thought I had taken my leave of Verona; but there is no end of the objects of curiosity which these Italian towns afford us. I have been led to a bas-relief, a truly antique and a very fine one. It stands on the outside wall of a house; an exposition that gives one pain, when one considers its merit. It represents a funeral repast, an epulum funbre, in the old manner. The inscription, which is in Greek, mentions the person, Enclea, the daughter of Agathon, and wife of Aristodemus. There are some fruit and wines upon the table. The principal figures are four, two of each sex, and the postures different: the women do not lie or lean, as the men, but sit upright. The expression and attitudes are masterly in the greatest degree. On the upper part of the stone there is a Doric entablature and pediment, and under that, at a small distance above the heads of the persons, are represented nine different sorts of instruments and utensils adapted to the subject: there is a canister, a cup, a lachrymatory, and some strigils.— You must excuse a very short letter: our equipages are at the door, and the time will not permit me to add any thing more.

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LETTER XLIX.

WE are used to laugh at the frequency of titles among the French : by the bye, I do not know whether they are not becoming as common, I am sure they are as ill applied, in England. I am arrived at a town of counts. You remember, I suppose, that Charles the Fifth made all the people of Vicenza such at once.

I see a promise of great entertainment in the buildings of the town : but though I have not yet examined them with particularity, I do not sit down to write without matter for my pen. The road from Verona hither has afforded me abundant occasion of speaking. I had been taught the national prejudice, of supposing England the finest country in the world : when I travelled through France, I found no reason to change my sentiments, or to dispute the justice of those accounts to which I had owed them ; but Italy gives me a new opinion.

I am not about to compare any thing to the verdure of a British meadow ; but you will allow the scene which presented itself on every part along this stage, was infinitely more picturesque and pleasing. The whole country is a regular plantation of mulberry trees : they stand in even series at due distances, and the vines which are planted at their feet, make so many natural festoons, reaching from tree to tree. Between the several rows of these plantations stand the fields of corn. There is an uniformity, I confess, in this ; and probably it was owing to this, that it pleased me much less toward the end

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of the stage, than it had just when I entered on it; but, upon the whole, it is wonderfully pretty. The whole way is upon a level, and all the country that is in sight is well cultivated, and full of plenty. The trees stand in the quincunx or chequer order, and the vines often spread themselves to a great extent among the branches, as well as meet from one to another. The mulberries are in general of the white kind, and the difference in colour between their fruit and that of the grapes, is a beautiful variety.

Vicenza is in the Venetian territories, the capital of the Vicentin, and the see of a bishop. It is a considerably large town, and populous. The mulberry trees feed silk worms in such numbers, as to give rise to a very considerable manufacture of it there. The town stands pleasantly between two rivers, and is fortified with a wall, but this is in but a bad condition; but within the town every thing wears a better face. The buildings are in general good, many of them magnificent: the streets are broad, and there are piazzas, very large, open and well built, and several spacious squares. The town hall is a good building. The dial is a fine piece of workmanship. They preserve here also an inscription to the honour of Gordian the Third; it was discovered in the sixteenth century. If you were particularly fond of architecture, I should say a great deal to you on that subject in regard to Vicenza; but to those who do not particularly apply to it, no study is so dry. There are unquestionably more models for the student in this science at Vicenza, than in any city I have seen. It abounds with pieces of Palladio's, public as well as private;

vate ; particularly there is a theatre built by that great man, in imitation of those of the Romans, a glorious pile ; and from the road we see also another noble remain of his art, a triumphal arch, made also in imitation of those of the antients, and not inferior to some of theirs : this lies on the right hand as we enter the city ; and the Campo Mazzo, which is seen through it, adds a vast grace to the view. The cathedral, the church of the Coronata, and St. Catherine's, are all in a good taste ; but I shall not teize you with a detail of things, too like what you have heard me mention already.

They have not that number of paintings in Vicenza, that one meets with in many parts of Italy ; but they have a great many good ones. I was vastly pleased with the force and fire of an altar-piece in the church of St. Pocco ; it is by Bassan, Giacomo Bassan, and is in his highest style of colouring : there is a glow and warmth in it that charms the eye at first sight, but if studied, it will appear a little tawdry. There is another altar-piece, by the same hand, at St. Luterio ; it is less striking at first sight, but it improves upon examination. Bordanne has left a history under the public house of the piazza ; it is of Noah and his daughter ; and though not equal to the finest pieces I have seen of his, it deserves praise. In the refectory of the Madona de Monte, there is a history of great merit ; it is by Paul Veronese ; the subject is our Saviour at a feast. The altar-piece in the Coronata is by the same hand ; it is the Adoration of the Magi. There is an altar of the same subject in your Foundling Hospital ; I saw it at the painter's, chevalier Casali's, before I left England. Indeed the seeing this

this of Veronese, puts that in no bad light with me.

Palladio has left memorials of himself, not only in the town, but about its neighbourhood. I have told you how extremely pleasant I found the plains, in view from the road to it ; the whole country about it is as beautiful ; and the country seats of the nobility add a lustre to the scene, while they receive a mutual one from it. That of count Poiani is a glorious one ; Palladio was the architect ; and the man who visits it, and has any knowledge in this science, needs not to be told so ; it is palpable at sight. The counts Trissin and Gualdi's also are at once elegant and superb. I hardly know a town in Italy, in which I would more willingly live, than Vicenza.

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L E T T E R L.

I Mentioned to you the pleasantness of the road to Vicenza ; that to Padua, whence I now write to you, put me more in mind of the English roads, than any that I have travelled since I left my own country. Toward the city, we were carried along a causeway, or raised road, greatly like those to the north of England. The town is one of the most singular I have seen : a part of it is of great antiquity, and part mere modern. This is not uncommon in the larger towns of France as well as Italy ; and in both, the original building and the additions to it, are distinguished by the name of the Old and New Town. But there

there is this singularity in Padua, that as in all the others the additional buildings are carried on from only one or two parts, here they surround the whole set of old buildings ; so that the old town stands in the heart of the new one. As singular as this appeared to me at Padua, I think if the people go on at London as they were doing when I left it, the same thing may be the case in that metropolis. I do not so well know what they are doing the city way ; but the church once called St. Martin's in the Fields is at least at as considerable a distance from them now, as any part of the old town of Padua, from the circumference of the new.

Padua is a large city ; its circumference cannot be less than eight or nine miles. Its form is circular ; and it is defended by a double wall, and regular bastions. I conceived a greater idea of it as we approached it, than I found made good when in it. There is a great deal of waste ground within the walls, and there is I know not what air of desolation visible in every part of it : there are a vast number of houses, even in the best parts of the town, empty ; and the inhabitants in even the best of the others, have a general look of discontent and dependance. I had read of Padua as a very flourishing place ; but its appearance at present speaks a great decay of that splendor. I was curious to ask the number of inhabitants ; it is a thing much easier come at in Italy than England. How will you be surprised to hear, that in a city of this circumference the amount is hardly to twenty-eight thousand !

Padua boasts of great antiquity : it is pretended to have been built by Antenor soon after the destruction

destruction of Troy ; and if so, is earlier by more than four hundred years than Rome. There do not want circumstances to favour this ; and the walls called Antenor's, yet shew themselves in remains capable of lasting out many more ages. I wonder what can have occasioned the present ill state of the enlarged city. The situation is pleasant : it stands in the center of a fine plain, and has two rivers. The soil is fruitful, and affords vast supplies of every kind ; and the air is more wholesome than in most parts of Italy. The town is not a very agreeable one indeed to live in, notwithstanding all its natural advantages. The streets are narrow and dark, and the buildings high. The place abounds with houses of the nobility ; but their masters are poor, and consequently the palaces out of repair. Family quarrels have no where been so fatal as in Padua ; they continue them from generation to generation. The spirit of Shakespear's Capulets and Mountagues reigns almost throughout among them ; and the Venetians their masters, who might dread their revolting or being troublesome if in a strict union and harmony, encourage instead of doing any thing to suppress their animosities. The brutality of these principal families has diffused itself among the people of an humbler class ; and to the excesses and wanton cruelties of the students, has been owing the decline, not to say the ruin, of what was once one of the most flourishing universities in the world.

I have been melancholy to see, beside the great quantity of unoccupied ground in Padua, many of the streets over-run with grass. Many of the best houses are at this time uninhabited, and of the others the greater part have lost the names
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of their old masters, and are a kind of seats of retirement to the noble Venetians.

I was conducted to the palace of the Foscari ; there is a court before it, of great extent, and of a peculiar appearance. It immediately presents to the accustomed eye the idea of an amphitheatre of the antients, and the opinion is confirmed by farther observations. The amphitheatre of Padua was famous in the Roman times ; these are the remains of it, and the walls shew parts of what once were its buildings, but they are obscured by the alterations and reparations.

The saint Anthony of Padua is a saint too notable in the Romish calendar, not to have been the subject of much of your remarks. There is a church dedicated to him, under the name of Il Santo the saint, but the sacrilegious rogue has stolen it from the virgin Mary. It was built in honour to the virgin, and dedicated to her name by its founder. But as soon as the illustrious modern rested his carcass there, no more respect was paid to the mother of God : the church was called by his name, or, what is more, by a name which at the same time that it is understood to mean him, gives him a preference to all the saints in heaven.

This is not the finest church in point of architecture, but it is much the richest, and the most honoured. It is full of pompous monuments, and silver lamps, and other costly ornaments stands about it in a wild profusion. The chapel of the saint is still more superbly decorated ; his body is deposited there in a tomb of white marble, the upper part of which is an altar. The tomb

tomb stands in the insulated manner, not joined to any thing : there are some cracks in the hinder part of it, through which, as a standing miracle, they tell you, that the bones of the saint, instead of the common smell of putrefaction, breathe out a constant perfume. I am a living witness to the truth of a very fragrant smell coming forth from these crevices, but whether it be from the bones of the saint, or from some other cause, I do not take upon me to determine : if the smell be from his carcass, he must have fed upon Florentine orrice, for that is the prevailing scent. Mr. Belchier, I remember, shewed our society, that a pig's bones might be died scarlet by the creature's feeding on madder, why may not a saint's bones be as well perfumed by his feeding upon this other root ? But this, being no great devotee to the Romish miracles, I leave to the determination of others.

On the walls of three of the four sides of the chapel, there are representations in bas reliefs, of white marble, of the acts and miracles of the saint. No matter for the truth of the legends, the pieces are well executed. There is one by Hieronymo Veronese, that I think the best piece of modern sculpture. I have seen in Italy two others, one by Sansovino and Tullio Laurhardo, and they all do honour to the names of those who executed them. On the open side of the chapel, where it communicates with the church, there are two angels in white marble, by Paladio, they are finely executed : they serve to hold two great silver candlesticks ; and beside the vast candles that are in these, there are more than forty silver lamps burning continually. This is a common custom in the churches in Italy, and
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it gives a glare as you enter, but the smoke from them obscures and destroys the beauty of all the inside of the place.

The resort to this church, and the tomb of this holy man, is little less than to the holy house at Loretto. One sees pilgrims from very remote places, rubbing their beads and their foreheads upon the tomb of the saint, and thinking themselves amply paid for the fatigues and dangers of the journey. I could not but smile, though in a very improper place, to see an old lady, who declared she had lost the sense of smelling many years, snuffing at the crannies behind the tomb, and declaring, that the sweet odour made its way into her brain in spite of all the obstructions. It was recommended to her to try other fragrant things when she should have left the chapel, in order to the determining whether the miracle were only momentary, or whether her faith and piety would not bless her with it for a continuance.

The concourse that is brought hither, shall I not rather say, by superstition than by devotion, is not credible. View Padua in any other part, and you lament its want of inhabitants; see this church, and you would imagine no city ever was so full of people: whatever regard I might be inclined to pay to the fragrance or the miracles of their saints bones, I found a great deal in the church worthy my attention. Andrea Briosco has left some fine monuments of his masterly hand in the choir; they are bas reliefs in wood, and though as old as the year 1520, are very fresh and perfect: there are some others in brals. Giacomo Velano has taken care to commemorate that they were of his doing, but they are by no means

means equal to the others. They are principally scripture histories, as are also the former.

I was surprised at a picture of a young man of a very lively air, though with great marks of devotion, an odd assemblage as I think I have seen together, but perfectly expressed in the painting, however they might have been in nature. I was not much informed in the history of the saint of the place, and you may imagine was greatly surprised to hear that this was his picture. They told me it was an original, taken from him in his life-time, but the inscription explained sufficiently the youthful aspect; it assured me that he died at thirty-six, in an age when other people hardly begin to make their pretences to sanctity. The picture is not a good one, but there is a very peculiar strength and character in the face.

The sanctuary is a new building, and an elegant one; it lies behind the choir; there is a great profusion of marble about it, and there are some statues by Paradio, which do him honour. I had like to have omitted looking into an old chapel that is behind the pulpit, and if I had I should not easily have forgiven either myself or my Cicerone, if afterwards informed of what it contained. 'Tis painted in Fresco, and the subjects are, The crucifixion of our Saviour, the casting lots upon the garment, and some other histories from the New Testament. They are done by Giotto, and are the best preserved of any thing of the kind I have seen. They are near five hundred years old, and yet retain a great deal of the original beauty and softness. I have always revered what I have seen of this old hand. I look upon him as one of the fathers of modern

painting. The title is given to his master ; but the remaining pieces of Cimabue are so vastly inferior to those of this scholar, and particularly to these of which I am speaking, that though he painted first on the new plan, he can hardly be said to have excelled those miserable painters, whom the state of Florence had sent for out of Greece, and under whom he studied, than Giotto did him. Cimabue knew nothing of the disposition of the shadows, and was miserably defective in perspective. Nothing of this sort is to be alledged against Giotto. There is nothing of that stiffness in these pieces, that is universal in those of Cimabue, and which he copied from his Greekish masters. The colouring is at once soft and bold, and the keeping perfectly good. The attitudes of all his figures are just, and those of many of them very graceful ; there is something in his heads that seems to say, Guido copied the principles of that divine air from him, in which he afterwards excelled both his master, and all the world. Anatomy seems not to have been so well understood, as it ought, in the time of Giotto, or painters seem not to have received it as a part of their profession. The naked figures are not equal, in these histories, to the cloathed ones. They tell me, there are pictures of his in many of the churches of Florence, that are greatly superior to these ; be it as it will, these have given me a much higher opinion of him than all I had read.

From this I was led into another chapel, all hung round with votive pictures. I don't know whether it was with more anger or contempt that I examined these memorials of fictions and extravagancies. Shall I give you a taste of them ?

them ? One of the most considerable is of a vast building, leaning on one side, and a naked man crawling out from under the foundation. The painting is worthy the story. They tell you, that the person who hung it there had been wrongfully imprisoned ; that he was kept in a tower without the opportunity of telling his case to any body : but that in his distress he prayed to saint James for his assistance, and that the saint hearing him, descended from heaven, and with a touch of his fore finger bent the whole tower on one side, till he crept out from under its walls. Whether the saint left the castle in this stooping situation, or with another touch of his finger set it right again, as also what and where it was situated, and whether yet in being, are circumstances concerning which we are unfortunately left in the dark. It must have been some odd fellow who prayed to so old fashioned a saint as saint James, the modern devotion all runs upon the canonized ones.

If I was out of patience at these votive pictures, in which there was nothing but the absurdity to disgust one, with what eyes do you imagine I must afterwards have seen the hand of Titian employed to give immortality to lies and nonsense. In the school of St. Anthony, a publick building near the church, there are the miracles of the saint painted in several pieces, scarce any of them by other than the most eminent hands, many by the master just mentioned, being all in Fresco, and they make a magnificent appearance.

One is the giving speech to a new-born infant. The father had been abroad ; the mother had come at an irregular time, and the child was

T 2 suspected

suspected as illegitimate. The saint was applied to, and you see him, in this piece, giving speech to the infant, and with that speech, discernment : the wise child is singling out his father in the crouds that attend. In another you see him playing the surgeon, though in a superior way, and setting on a boy's foot again. The youth had confessed kicking his mother ; the saint had told him his foot ought to be cut off. The boy ran home, and executed the sentence, and the saint, judging what he had suffered to be sufficient, sets it on again. In another, the saint is sending back a fugitive soldier to his home : the fellow had killed an innocent wife in suspicion, St. Anthony met him as he was running away, and is, in this picture, bidding him go back, assuring him that his wife is alive again, and that she had never been guilty.

Absurdity, as all this is from beginning to end, would you conceive it is Titian's pencil that has told the stories ? He has done them gloriously, but to me has libelled the church, rather than commemorated its honour. This is not the only place where I have seen these foolish and lying histories recorded by the pencil. In most of the monasteries they have the life and actions of the founder related in this manner, and be the cloister never so big, they generally find just enough in the story to fill it.

LETTER LI.

I Have been long in describing to you the church of St. Anthony. I told you it was not the finest building. Palladio designed that of St. Giustina, which I have since been visiting, and I don't know that he ever planed a more perfect edifice in its kind. The outside declares it a truly noble structure, and within it is decorated in a manner worthy such an exterior. It is unlucky in regard to the outside, that you no where come well at it ; or what is still more unlucky, the only part that you can see favourably, is the Fa-cade, and that is unfinished. It is left only in rough brick-work, to be covered at some future time with marble This scandalous practice among the Romish priests, to leave their churches unfinished, for a pretence of begging legacies, which are never applied to that use, lest they should obviate the occasion of others, is at once a reflection of the severest kind on the churchmen, and a scandal to their country. It is almost universal. All along the nave of the church there was a range of lesser cupolas ; they are very elegant when seen at a due distance, but when you are too far off, they appear to embarrass and encumber the building, and when too near, they are not seen at all, or only their tops are so, and they have an odd, irregular, and whimsical look. When we are within the church, we see them in all their beauty ; they give an air of loftiness and grandeur, more than I remember to have met with in any other church. This is of the number of those things which set Palladio's character very high with me. Any man can pursue the steps of

those who have gone before him ; nor is it very wonderful if he who sees the failings or disadvantages of the plans he imitates, should, in this or that particular, add to, or improve them. It is in these flights of genius, in these extravagancies of imagination, that the architect shews his fancy and his judgment. A beauty of a new kind connected with the whole, and seeming a natural, and, as it were, a necessary part of, is what distinguishes the master, and the original, from the copyist and the Plagiary. The whole church within is, indeed, a scene of elegance, and what is very singular in an edifice of this kind, of cheerfulness. There is nothing of that gloom that renders the generality of churches, as well in England as in France, at once awful and dire. The whole is seen at one or other view in equal openness, and with equal advantage. The light is every where full, but no where glaring ; the several parts are decorated with ornaments, but not loaded or encumbered with them, which in too many others is the case. The architect indeed seems in general to have less than the poet or the painter, the art of knowing when to have done. The *Manum de tabula*, is a rule of infinite use, but most difficult practice in all the cases, and it is, at least with me, an almost universal observation in these buildings, as well at home as abroad, that if one half of the ornaments were taken away, the remainder would shew to a much greater advantage. This was always my opinion from judgment, it now is so from experience. I thought this once, but now I know it. I have seen in St. Giustina that reserve in the distribution of ornaments, which before had only, in my thoughts, brought into practice, and the consequence is all that beauty and elegance

elegance in which I saw them there. Perhaps you will be surprised to hear me say it, but I am of opinion this is greatly the most perfect of all the works of this architect. I have seen many fine ones : I expected nothing great from this ; so that it is a judgment without prepossession which I am so free to deliver to you. The world seems universally in the taste to allow ornaments and beauty as the same thing ; hence it is, that the architect is led to throw in such a profusion of them : hence it is, that we hear the approbation of the gazer rising in proportion to the redundancy of them ; and hence it is, that a church, in the examining of which I have had more pleasure than any other, is little spoken of. I wished for a designer with me. The several prospects, from different parts of the inside of this edifice, would make most beautiful figures in perspective : they ought to be so commemorated, and it would be an advantage to the world, as well as a credit to the taste of the person who should do it. The whole church is finely adorned with marble, and the workmanship in most places exceeds the materials, though the marbles are many of them of the finest of the common kinds.

It grieves me to say any thing in derogation from the character of this edifice, after I have said so much in praise of it. Either I, or the generality of those who shew, as well as those who see these structures, have a very odd taste. Be it as it will, of this I am sure, I have great freedom in delivering my opinions to you : but as I never give you my sentiments without the reasons for my entertaining them, you will determine easily whether they have justice or ca-

price for their origin. If you have been told any thing of this Padouan church, it is that the pavement is particularly elegant: this was the great thing named to me as an inducement to bestow a quarter of an hour to see it: After the preface that I have just now made, I shall not scruple to affirm to you, that instead of being charmed, I have been highly disgusted with it. If grandeur, or if beauty and expence be the same thing, this is undoubtedly the finest and the most beautiful pavement I have seen. But pray is not a pavement a place to walk upon, and would not one wish to walk easy? If so, the appearance of walking easy is also what ought to be the aim of the projector of a floor; and he deserves our contempt, amidst all his labour and expence, who contrives that it shall appear to have inconveniences, when it has none in reality. What would you think of a man, who should introduce you into a magnificent building, and make you walk upon distant points and open rafters? Would not the man be called mad, that did this in reality? and is not he absurd that pretends to it in appearance only, and frights you with the prospect?

I have never any where seen a pavement of so much price, so much labour, or so much variety, as that of St. Giustina's church; but, by the bye, I do not know that variety has any busines in a pavement. It is all of marble, and the marbles are of various colours, and differently arranged, not only in the small chapels, but what to me is much more unpardonable, in the different parts of the nave of the church. They are disposed in lights and shades in such a manner, as in some places to represent a whole cluster of

cubes, each set on one corner. In another, they are so arranged as to leave intermediate hollows all the way ; and in another they represent long beams, laid in the manner of rafters at a distance, with openings between. What propriety (and without propriety there can be no beauty) can there be in thus presenting to the eye places to walk upon, in which you are to go unevenly or in pain ? I assure you they are so well laid, and the shadowing so justly kept, that my friend M——'s two or three times stepped back, or got on one side, to avoid the inconvenience of walking on them. This you will say, in a church remarkable for its good light, is singular enough. The person who shewed me the church, told me with great pride, in the pomp and magnificence of his country, that this pavement alone had cost three hundred thousand silver ducats, that is, between fifty and sixty thousand pounds. I hope he lied ; they usually do so on these occasions : if otherwise, it is a reflection, and a very severe one, on those whom he meant to praise. Never was such a sum so shamefully applied.

As I went out, I could not but turn back to lament the deficiency in the front. The person who conducted me, would not suffer me to go away with any disadvantageous notions of his country. For fear I should suppose it want of money that occasioned the naked brick-work to appear there, he assured me that the friars of this convent (they are Benedictins) were rich enough to do any thing. It is pity but some ruler would be public spirited enough to compel them to what they are so well able to do, and wipe off the stain, at the same time that he took away the pretence for farther deception.

You

You have heard me occasionally mention Paradio Genoese as a good statuary : there are in this church monuments of his art that call aloud for his being acknowledged a very great one. There is a Virgin Mary, a very fine piece, and a dead Christ, that excels most modern sculptures. They are both in fine white marble, and have had the last hand of the statuary. I mentioned the difficulty of knowing when to have done in the painter, the poet, and even the architect ; but the rule has no force with the statuary ; he cannot be too intent on finishing.

There is no church I have yet seen, that comes in any competition with this on another account ; and that, however despicable to you or me, an account more important with those who have the possession of it, than all the architecture, sculpture and statuary in the world. They have, or they pretend to have, the remains of more and greater saints than any one besides. In one part of the church there is a well full of bones. You might supply such a one at any time, on a day's notice, from any of the burying grounds of London and Westminster. It is covered with a grate, through which you look down upon the sacred and inestimable treasure ; and is surrounded by a paraper wall, for the sake of the greater respect and security. The bones, they tell us, belonged to a vast number of martyrs, who suffered death in the Campo Santo before the church. Here one continually sees pilgrims of different ages and complexion, rubbing their beads upon the stones, and kissing them with great fervor and devotion. I have been astonished at the force of enthusiasm on these occasions : I am confident there

there is a pleasure in these acts of extravagance, greater than we men of the world know in our most extravagant sensual indulgences. All delight is seated in the imagination more than in the senses ; and if that be fully possessed, it is no matter by what. I am perswaded these zealots find as high a satisfaction in kissing a few pieces of amber rubbed against a marble, as we in the most dissolute pleasures.

These martyrs bones are, however, but a small part of the treasure of this church, in that kind. They cannot be content with less than two of the evangelists. It is an odd piece of fortune, that one church should be possessed of two of the four ; but you might as well dispute the infallibility of our lord the pope, as disbelieve it there. They shew the tombs of St. Matthew and St. Luke, and assure us, that they are possessed of both the bodies. I ventured to ask them, how it was that there was also a body of St. Luke preserved as an inestimable treasure at Venice ? They smiled at the pretensions of the Venetians ; told me they knew all that story thoroughly well, and that Venice might pretend to what it would, but theirs was the true St. Luke, and that of which those boasters were possessed of, was no better than a counterfeit. It would not be a little to the honour of some of these infallibilities, to determine a controversy which at once divides and scandalizes the church. If one of them were buried in peace, the other would possess more honours than both do at present. But the objection is, suppose we bury the right saint ? I am apt to believe, they may be assured of burying none but the wrong, if they put both in quiet under ground. The St. Luke of the Padouans
was

was at this time indeed, I found, in some degree of disgrace ; the then pope having, at the instigation of his favourite cardinal, declared in favour of the Venetian saint : but they told me this was all cabal and artifice, and they did not doubt but the time would come, when they should see their own saint again declared to be the true and authentic one. The mischief of the dispute was very evident here. More regard was paid by the devotees to the well of martyrs bones, though no body pretended ever to have heard of the name of one of them, than to the holy evangelist : so important is it to have a title recognized above. St. Matthew is an undisputed, original, and genuine corps ; that is to say, no other city claims having him. I saw the different regard paid to him and his brother saint, in a very strong light on this occasion : people were crawling on their hands and knees about the tomb of that saint, while they passed by this with great tranquillity.

The decorations of this church, though in fewer number than those of many others, are elegant and good in their several kinds. There are some bas-reliefs of wood in the stalls of the choir : they are scripture stories, and are executed in a very masterly manner. The altar-piece is by no less a hand than Paul Veronese ; the story is the martyrdom of St. Giustina, to whom the church is dedicated. There is a great deal of strength in the figures, and fine expression and uncommon force in the countenances of the principal ; but it is greatly inferior to many of the pieces, for which I have been used to honour the same hand : there wants that freedom and graceful ease, which makes so conspicuous a part

part of the beauty in other of this master's pieces.

There are some paintings in an old choir adjoining, which people did not much regard, but which I studied with great satisfaction : there was a stiffness in all the figures, and a dryness of manner that had something forbidding, at first sight ; and what has added to the disrepute which I find they are in, is doubtless the faults in the draperies, which are full of little folds and plaits, and look stiff and awkward. Those who condemn the paintings on this foundation, should however consider, that this was the custom of the times, and they must give up all the paintings of three hundred years backward, if they throw by these on that account. I had the patience, can I call it patience ? I found myself irresistibly drawn to examine deeper. Shall I give you a fair encomium on my own judgment ? I recollect the Triumphs of Julius Cæsar which we have at Hampton-Court, and esteem at so high a rate : the pictures in this choir brought those into my mind. I determined them to be by Andrea Mantegna. The person who attended me, and who had not been used to see much notice taken of these, could not say much on the subject ; but I afterwards found my opinion, which was more and more strengthened by what I observed in them, confirmed by those of more knowledge.

To give you some idea of the works of a master which is not much talked of, and which I dare believe you have not heard mentioned by any who have been here, I am to tell you, that for correctness of design I have hardly seen anything that excels them : the keeping is excellent :

no body seems to have been a greater master in perspective ; and there is a peculiarity in the pieces, which runs throughout them all, that is in the foreshortening of the figures, that stand in such positions as to require it : you know how often good painters are false in this, and even when they are true, are ungraceful. I never saw more perfect truth in figures of this kind, and there is perfect grace in all of them. They tell me there are engravings from two or three of these by his own hand. I had great curiosity to see some of them, but could not meet with any. I should have had a singular pleasure in viewing the productions of such a genius in this art, and one who, if not the first was very nearly so, who practised it in Italy. It was about the middle of his life that Finiguerra, a silversmith of Florence, found out the art, by printing off upon paper what he had engraved upon his plate ; and it is not easy to say that Montegna was not the very first that pursued the plan on copper.

In the same choir where these pieces of Montegna are, there is an altar-piece, finely executed, the colouring in particular is noble and delicate to a very uncommon degree : I had no guess at the master, but they told me it was by Romain. From this choir they led me into a subterranean opening ; it is at present a chapel ; but they tell us it was once St. Giustina's prison : it is painted in Fresco. There are also some very good paintings in fresco all round one of the cloisters of the convent. Much of it, both here and in the chapel, is very well preserved. The convent is large, and is remarkable for two things, one of the most ornamented libraries, and one of the best furnished cellars in Europe.

The

The church of St. Ementani gives a very singular privilege to heretics ; protestants are suffered to be buried there ; a thing not allowed in any other part of these dominions. There are not a great many paintings here, but some of them are very fine ones : the altar is a superb one, and on each side of it there is a saint by Giorgino, done with all the force and spirit that distinguish that masterly hand.

In a side chapel I had an opportunity of again admiring the master, of whom I lately spoke with so much warmth, Andrea Montegna. There is a history by him preserved in this place, that if it does not excel the pieces I mentioned before in strength of expression, or in the correctness or judgment expressed in the design, is a vastly more pleasant picture, from the more gaudy colouring. The story is the death of St. James, and it is indeed very greatly, as well as very beautifully told. Giusto has enriched this chapel also with a history in his highest style ; it is the death of St. Christopher. I had admired these pictures, and they deserved it ; but I must confess, they appeared in a much less honourable light a few minutes afterwards. They led me into the sacristy, and shewed me a St. John by Guido. The graces of that master were surely all his own : he must have received them all from Heaven ; it is impossible he should have owed them to a master. There is a grace in the air and attitude of the face in this picture, and an expression of sanctity and innocence in the countenance, that I have not seen, nor expect to see rivalled. I was

I was severe upon the pavement of Giustina ; the roof of the Eremetani is as particular : it looks like an overturned galley, and you expect the seats, and ribs and rafters upon your head every moment. It is called a beauty, nay in some degree is one ; it is highly finished ; but you must give me leave to fancy it is badly designed ; it wants propriety.

Padua is famous for gardens, and they for curious trees and plants. I cannot say that I relished these so much as I ought ; but M——s enjoyed them enough for both. He declared to me, that there were not only more, but better plants in the single garden of Morosini, than in those of Chelsea and Oxford put together. If there were any thing, he added, that deserved comparison with this noble and useful collection of living vegetables, it was the garden of the late lord Petre in Effex. You remember that young nobleman. I always thought there was something of taste and curiosity in him ; but I had not heard to what branch he had bent his studies. Botany is an odd one, but it is not without its utility : those who study it tell me too, that it has its pleasures. I saw all that was to be shewn in these gardens with attention, though without rapture. I do not know that any thing escaped my eye ; but though I was pleased enough with one view, I feel no desire of seeing them over again.

I was struck with the sight of the robust aloe ; the juicy houseleek pleased me too, and the tall and angular torch-thistle, rising without leaves, only in form of an angulated column. The prickly pear surprised me with its leaves growing, not

not upon stalks, but out of one another's sides. I acknowledge to have seen an agreeable variety in all these; but I have no conception of the nature of that pleasure which people take in looking at them over and over, and over again.

When we had seen the several gardens, we were conducted to the palace of Mantua. It is a noble building, and well furnished. The late possessors seem to have been of taste: there is a cabinet well stored with curiosities, and not loaded with those bagatelles, which, in general, take up too much room in the very best Italian collections. I wish I could say the library had been collected with as judicious a reserve: it abounds with trifles; but it were injustice in the highest degree to say this, without adding, that it abounds also with pieces of real and of great value. There was one thing that surprised and pleased me greatly here. I do not remember that I had heard of it. It is a colossal statue: the figure is of Hercules; the statuary Ammanati Florentino. It is a good and a very august one: the height is no less than nineteen cubits. I shall agree with you, that this is nothing, in comparison of those immense pieces of which we read, and of which we see remains from among the antients: but as a modern work, it gave me great pleasure.

I confess to you, that few things have given me a greater reverence for the artists of old time, than the greatness of these designs. What are we to think of statues mentioned by Pliny, and other writers of more credit, a finger of which was of more than the height of a common statue, and whose body contained I know not how many load of stone? We should suppose such things

had not existed, were it not that we possess the remains of them, and cannot be deceived in measuring the giant by his foot. I do not imagine, that these huge works were executed with all that masterly perfection which we admire in their other statues. Longinus, if I remember right, makes a disadvantageous comparison of these with Polycletes's soldier, and calls them clumsy ; but be that as it may, there was something so august and noble in the design, that we seem to fall much behind them in spirit, who do not follow them in it. I cannot say a vast deal of the accuracy of this modern colossus ; but, upon the whole, there is an idea of grandeur and magnificence attends the throwing one's eye up the vast height of it.

The anatomical theatre is a noble institution. I cannot say it is the handsomest building that might have been contrived for the purpose, but it deserves a much higher praise ; it is the most convenient that can be conceived. The table for dissection is in the middle of the area ; the space about this is but just wide enough for walking round ; the seats rise immediately behind this, and stand so close, and are so narrow and steep, that the upper ones, excepting only for the distance, afford as good a view as the under.

Notwithstanding what I have said of the general bad condition of Padua, as to the streets and buildings, I am to confess to you, that on going through parts of it which I had not seen at first, I saw many things that extremely pleased me. Several of the houses in some of the better streets have been painted on the outside, in the manner of those of Genoa, and some of them are

are by no less hands than Giorgione and Paul Veronese. You will not imagine that capital pictures of such masters are to be seen on them; but this I do assure you, they are such, that a person of any tolerable degree of judgment could not be at a loss to know the hand from which they came. They are imperfect in their very nature. There is, I will not say a laboured, but there is an intended wildness in the designs, and many of them are executed only with two colours; but notwithstanding all this, they are many of them very pleasant. There is another piece of elegance also about some of the houses in Padua, in a particular where you would not expect to find it: the knockers of the doors are pieces of fine cast and repaired work. They consist of the figures of various animals, represented in different, and often singular and odd postures, and some of them of foliage and festoon work, in a fine taste: Grifoni has been eminent in the designs of these. One meets with many of them, in which he has imitated the antique lamps very happily.

I mentioned to you the bones of the two evangelists, and a whole well full of those of martyrs. The Paduans seem resolved to immortalise themselves by remains of this kind: they shew the bones of Antenor, the original founder of their city, and those of Livy. They hold both the one and the other of these mouldering skeletons in a degree of veneration little inferior to that in which they esteem the very remains of the evangelists, and, it is possible, will some time or other make saints of them. You know that Boetius has fared no worse at Pavia. What may be said for the piety of Antenor, I am not well informed.

The history of the venerable Trojan is a little imperfect in this, as well as in some other respects; but I cannot help thinking Titus Livius deserves as much renown for his history, as the saint of Pavia for his consolation of philosophy.

Antenor's monument stands at the end of one of the best streets. I saw it without any great degree of veneration; but I cannot say so in regard to Livy's tomb. I confess (I glory in it) that I paid the tribute of an involuntary tear to the manes of the brave and great historian. This tomb is in the town-house, a large old building, with a naked lofty roof. There are the remains of some paintings by Giotto toward the upper end, but they are miserably decayed. In this house also stand the Lapis Vituperii. The debtor who would submit to sit down bare-breasted on this stone in a full assembly, and swear himself not worth so much as a small sum, about five pounds of our money, was freed from the debt. It was an odd custom, and occasioned so many inconveniences, that I cannot wonder it was discontinued.

L E T .

LETTER LII.

I Promised to write to you as often as any thing occurred worth your attention. I did not know what I entailed upon myself, but if you have pleasure in the consequences, I cannot miss of it. We have been eight days at sea. Pen and ink farewell, cried I, as I entered the vessel : Paper ! I blush to recollect the reams I blotted of thee, but your servant for a fortnight. What is so idle as a man's resolving not to talk, because he fancies he shall have nothing to say. Every sentiment delivered in conversation, every gesture, every glance is matter of praise or blame, and he can no more be silent, than he can want occasions of speaking.

It is just so with the man who has friendship in his heart, at the height to which you have raised it in mine, when he encounters any thing that gives him pleasure. You have raised the devil of good-natured impertinence, and you must see him employed. What subject for a letter, you will naturally say, where there are but two objects for the observation ? Sea or Sky might furnish a thousand ; but you know I have declared against all beaten topicks. The path into which I have thrown my enquiries is new, I shall see, on the same ground, what a thousand have overlooked ; and it is only of these observations that you shall have the fruits,

I do not know that a good evening at sea has any claim to my attention on this particular plan. Every poet, and every philosopher, every writer

of romance and madrigal have painted it : people that have not seen it, have described it to those who have not seen it, and the very creature of imagination has had its charms : how poor to the reality ! I am particular, perhaps, in my ideas of imagery and expression, but you know it has been my opinion always, that the painters excel the poets in that article. I have seen more glory in the setting sun of Titian, than in all the

Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ

of Virgil, or the pale fire, but I will not quote Greek, of Homer ; but if even Titian had seen the setting sun of half an hour ago, he would have burnt his pictures. At once soft and strong, at once delicate and noble as he is, infinitely, as he has excelled all mortal men in the glowing of his colours ; the poets are not fainter images of his splendor than he of that of nature. Warm with the subject I was set down to write to you : the scene yet living in my eye, I was attempting that which I have already declared impossible, the giving you a just idea of it. But I am called away : accident favourably severe to my idle intentions, bids me lay down the pen, perhaps never to take it up again. You wonder at the talking of a storm in the midst of such a glorious tranquility ; I do so too : if we survive, you will hear of it, if not, I shall be glad to have given myself, though it cannot reach you, a testimony of my having employed some of my latest thoughts in your service, and shall mutter to myself, as I fold this paper,

Extremum hoc munus morientis habeto.

LETTER LIII.

HOW we smile at danger when it is no more! There is a pleasure, a great one; there is a kind of triumph in talking of the hazards we have passed. A letter which I closed in a sort of despair, serves but as the cover to the story of the danger, and you shall have it fully.

It would not be easy for me to recollect a time when I was easier at heart, or in happier spirits than while employed about that letter. The gay sky overcast with me before it did so on the horizon. The master of the vessel, with whom I have entered into a particular intimacy, came without ceremony, and with a look that spoke what had superseded complaisance, a look of sorrow bordering on despair, told me we were in the worst latitude in which a storm could have happened, and that we were to prepare for one. I threw down my pen, after taking my Virgilian leave of you, and mounted the deck. I thought he bantered me. You know the scene I had left, it was continued in all but its splendor. The sun was in the arms of his green-haired mistress, and it was the air, for there did not appear a cloud, that was inflamed about him. The whole horizon did not afford one speck that hid its grey; the wind blew from the same quarter, and in the same moderation that it had done before. I almost laughed to see all the bustle of furling sails, and taking down of rigging, that I had observed in the height of a tempest. It seemed an exercise, and I was rallying the master for the bustle in which I saw him on the occasion. He had

little time to inform me of his reasons, but he pointed to the stern of the ship, and bad me mind those *Petterells*. I was surprised to see a number of birds about us at such a distance from all land. I was astonished to observe how the flock encreased by additional numbers from one or other quarter, and was not less so, to observe with what a regular course they attended the vessel's way. The sight was new and strange : and there appeared to me nothing to interrupt my enjoying it. It was not till after many questions, and as many execrations in return, that M——s, who had come upon deck with me, received information, that those birds foretold a storm. The wind began to shift, and we to believe them ; the hatches were ordered to be shut, and people who had no business above deck, were desired to go down. The winds grew louder, we heard them above before we felt them in their force upon us. The sky was covered, and the lowering clouds drove counter to the wind that carried us.

Terror sat in every face, every hand was ready. It grew dark from a double cause, the night and the tempest : we who were passengers obeyed the injunction of leaving the deck to those who wanted its room, only M——s, who was all this while in the steerage, levelling his gun, and deaf as well to the whistling of the winds, as the oaths and curses of the pilot, begged my interest, that he might be permitted to stay there till he had shot one of the birds ; for he assured me, upon his honour, it was a species he had never seen. I reverence the philosopher ; from this day I acknowledge his title to the appellation in every sense of it. You have admired, and with reason, the calmness and intrepidity of an English officer,

who

who when marching up to a desperate attack, took notice of some pelicans that flew over his head, and observed to his brother in command, that no bird in the universe gave so excellent a flavour to soop. I claim your equal acknowledgments in favour of my attendant, who felt no pain, nor danger, while there was an object in his favourite study, that he had not observed, to bespeak his attention. He succeeded, nor were his triumphs of less force than his expectations. He spent the hours of the severest terror to us all, in examining the beak, and counting the feathers of the wings and the tail. He was long debating, in the very jaws of death, to which of the Linnæan classes the bird should be referred; and I verily believe the joy of the sailors was not greater on the subsiding of the tempest, than his on the discovery: The Grecian never pronounced his *euphyse* with half that fervour that accompanied the word Passer, from the mouth of my enraptured friend, and it was not two minutes more, before, on examining his papers, he began to laugh at his own blindness, for not discovering sooner, that this was the *Procellaria*. The generality of the passengers, for there were several of us together on this occasion, were ready to cut the throat of a fellow, who was playing with a bird's feathers in the middle of a tempest, and disturbing their prayers with his mutterings and his exclamations, I cannot pretend to have been quite pleased with him at the time, but you will agree with me in reverencing him since. I know of no use there is in discomposure of mind, when men have nothing to do but to submit to what happens, and I have envied my naturalist the being master of a subject that can supercede all other thoughts on so disagreeable an occasion. I do not know that he

he will recover the good opinion of the ship's company, during the voyage, but for me,

Exeo Corydon, Corydon est tempore nobis.

Shall I describe to you the tempest ? Can I describe it : it will give you pain, but you will remember that it is over, and with the danger the remembrance of the pain which it occasioned should be lost : it was evening : it succeeded the most happy calm : we had notice to prepare for it, but the notice filled us with double terror. We were in the worst place where it could have happened : night was to be the season of our suffering it : a dead stillness immediately preceded it ; the sails yet unfurled, flapped against the masts : the vessel stood erect, and hardly tottered : from this dreadful suspence winds whistled every way at once ; the masts were loaded ; on the deck, men ran in one another's way, all hurrying to do, none sensible what was to be done. Burst all at once upon us a body, as it were, of wind from one quarter : flat on her side lies the vessel ; the sailors roll upon the deck ; the waves swell, rise, break over us ; all is darkness, horror, and fury ; every surge washes over the covered decks, and all we see of it is the white foam that follows.

Homer must have felt a storm. Poetry, his poetry, I mean, is as much superior to all painting in the imagery of a tempest, as painting even to his poetry in the description of a calm. But Homer was born for the sublime, and you who read him with the true taste, will find that nothing affects him so nobly as the great and the terrible : he is never so much himself as in the

ravage

ravage of whirlwind, or the fury of a general engagement.

— The storm comes bursting from the skies,
Swell'd with the winds the lashing surges rise :
Encreas'd to watry mountains swift they grow,
And beat the lab'ring vessel to and fro :
The decks are white with foam, the dreadful
blast
Roars in the sails, and bellows round the mast,
The sailors trembling stand with looks aghast ; }
For death, impending death, no help to save,
Stares in their face, and gapes in ev'ry wave.

The horror of the scene had conjured up all the terrors that divine poet has crowded into this description. I was revolving, with a kind of pleasing horror, the passage, and shuddering with the joint effects of art and nature, when a vast crack seemed to bespeak the bursting of the vessel. In an instant from her flat posture she was erect and tottering. I gave myself up for lost : I felt the imaginary quietus, and could persuade myself we sunk : in an instant flat we were thrown down on the opposite side : the candles were dashed out : the people on their knees were thrown down : I who was standing was thrown to the opposite side of the cabin. M——s was, with undismayed composure, actuated by thoughts that overbalanced all the danger, stretching the tail feathers of his bird on pins upon a table. The sudden motion threw down his apparatus ; and while I was preparing for immediate death, he was peevishly complaining, that he was obliged to begin his account again. I ascended the deck. I learned from the master, that the shock which had terrified us, was the tacking about of the vessel,

vessel, and had the joy to hear that the wind was abating. The storms in this part of the world are dreadfully violent, but they are short : daylight and the calm returned together ; we saw no more of the fatal presagers of the tempest, and the master affected to laugh at our fears. It had blown hard, he said, but there was no danger.

I had now an opportunity to examine, with my eager friend, the bird which had given us the timely notice of our danger, and to talk with the master, and the sailors, on the subject of what I could no longer laugh at, as imaginary, its fore-knowledge of a tempest. The bird is one of the prettiest I have seen. M——'s has very carefully preserved that which he shot, and we shall be able to shew you what has, perhaps, never been seen otherwise than on the wing before. In the mean time I will give you the best idea I can of it in words, and, perhaps, save the idea of it, at least, from some accident by flood or fire, by moths or rats, that may befall the original. But I am tired, though not of writing to you, yet of writing. I shall recover myself by to-morrow.

L E T.

LETTER LIV.

I Might have continued my former, for no post hurries me to conclude. You will laugh at the division of one subject into three letters, all which you receive together; but there is a relief in breaking off, to me I am sure there is: I wish I was sure there was not to you.

I promised you some account of the singular, and to you, and to the greater part of the world, unknown creature, the storm-bird. I shall endeavour to make it pay me for the frights under which I commenced my acquaintance with it, by the pleasure with which I flatter myself you will receive so new a thing as its history. Its bigness is nearly that of our common lark, but the structure of its feet is perfectly different: instead of the long heel of that bird, it is singular in this, that there is none at all. Its colour is blackish throughout; you will begin to smile when you hear this, after I have been talking of its beauty, but your smile will not be lasting; its back is black indeed, but over it there is diffused a glow of a blue purple, almost too bright to look upon; this shifts and changes in the manner of the colours on the changeable silks, and is sometimes almost lost: on the neck there is some mixture of that green and purple which we see on the neck of the drake or peacock. The head is almost totally blue, the colour of the violet and the black scarce seen through it. The breast and sides are also black in the general tinge, but there is a bright glow of ruddy purple diffused over them, as the blue upon the back. The tops of the wings,

wings, and the lower part of the back have some variegations of white, that render the whole extremely beautiful. The wings are vastly long; they reach beyond the extremity of the tail, when closed, and when expanded in the flight, the body of the creature appears nothing to them. Nature, provident for all her creatures, has adopted the organs of this little bird to its manner of living; fish are its food, the surface of the wide sea its proper habitation, stranger as it is to land, for they tell me it is never seen on shore; to be eternally flying would be insupportable with the wings of the swallow; strange to the imagination that does not comprehend the intents and purposes of providence: it has the feet of the duck. The legs are long and black, and they are naked quite up to the body, not feathered to the joint, as in other birds. The feet are very large in proportion to the bulk of the bird, and the toes joined one to another by a thick black membrane. The eyes are bright, and their aspect piercing. I have not seen so daring a look in any bird, not even in the hawk kind, as in this little creature, though dying when it was brought in. The beak is formed for the prey it is to seize; it is long and slender, and has sharpness, though no great strength. The joint is a little hooked; but the upper chop does not hang over the under, as we see in parrots and eagles. The nostrils are placed as you see them in the swallow. They form a little protuberance over the middle of the upper chop of the beak, and are divided from one another by a membrane.

You will say I improve in my natural history. It is a study I am thoroughly in love with, notwithstanding the ridiculous light in which poor

M—s

M——s is continually representing it to me, I mean, by his conduct and behaviour, for his words deify nature above all the Jupiters and Junos of a heathen ritual. If you should be inclined to give me credit for the terms, they when they are good, are too often his; you see my modesty, but the matter is always my own.

You will be curious to know how this little creature discovers the approaching storm before the sky, the sea, or the air disclose the slightest signal of it; and why it is that it informs those who will be endangered by it, in time, to give them preparation. I was as inquisitive on this head, and you shall know the answers I received to my questions. You shall have more: impertinent as it may be, you shall have my opinion. Our people were of the Romish persuasion, and of the most ignorant class, I do not except the master. I believe he knew his business perfectly, but for any thing farther, his mind seemed a great blank. Superstition is always powerful in proportion to the want of information, and theirs is a religion in which it is encouraged. They told me universally of the certainty with which the presage was made: they assured me the birds were never seen otherwise than casually and singly, unless when a storm was coming, and they religiously received it as a kind of miracle, that they were sent to warn them of the danger. On farther enquiry I found that the bird was met with in almost all latitudes; that the Northern seas afforded it as well as these warmer climates: and though my naturalist insists upon it, that neither Ray, nor Willoughby, nor Androvandus, nor a whole list of hard-named authors, whom he ran over with great volubility of tongue on this occasion,

occasion, have named it. I am greatly deceived, if the honest voyager Dampier has not given some account of it. I think I even remember the name in him, and I beg you will examine. I shall be proud to confound my doughty philosopher out of such a writer, as he, reverencing nothing but his own jargon, holds in high contempt.

You know I have been always an enemy to the miraculous and marvellous, of which the writers, as well as the readers of our time, are so fond. I think, I have examined this matter with all the candour of an impartial scrutiny; and that I can resolve the whole into the result of natural causes, without having recourse either to the absurd, and, to speak freely, impious pretence of the immediate interposition of heaven: or supposing the little bird fraught with wisdom, compassion, and generosity of sentiment, as must be the case if all were done upon its own mere motion. -

You will allow me, that self-preservation is a law implanted by the great hand which formed the creation on all his works: where reason does not point out the road to this, instinct supplies its place. These are all the principles I shall require, and from these I think this whole surprising circumstance may be accounted for on the common rules of nature's governance; and that all that will be proved from it, more than the system of self-preservation in the creature, is that as in a thousand, perhaps as in all other cases, the several links in that amazing chain, are so connected, that the creature which follows the irresistible dictates of his own power to his own good, is always

always instrumental, at the same time, and by the same act, to that of others.

The bird is the longest winged of any of its kind, perhaps in proportion to its bulk, the longest winged of all the species ; it sails upon the air like the kite ; and it flies higher, and far swifter than any other bird. It has been customary with me to view them in the air since this singular acquaintance which I have made with them ; though so weak is general curiosity, that but for this accident I never should have regarded them. I have seen them rise from the surface of the sea, and be out of sight in a few moments ; I have seen them traverse the whole visible horizon, which, taking each way from the ship, is near forty miles in so few minutes ; that you would accuse me of the miraculous which I have been disclaiming, if I told you of it. Nature's benefits, however, are not always without their inconveniences : the same expanse of wing that is thus favourable to the bird in a serene air, makes it the sport of winds, and it is tossed about often to its destruction. I have always observed, that it is in the still air that they fly high ; when there is but a little gust they swim, and are seen no where but on the surface, and even there are but very ill able to bear the rolling and breaking of the billows.

It is not a wonder, that a creature so swift of flight should make its way, with all rapidity, before the storm that threatens it with destruction. It is not a wonder, that it should arrive in places to which that storm is travelling along the air some little time, for it is not long before it reaches the same spot : in this case, to what end does the

flight serve? to seek some shelter and defence: and in the open sea, what is so adapted to give that defence as the bulk of a ship? The birds never fail to settle about the vessel which they meet with in this their consternation; they follow it, and they shelter themselves, as well as they can, behind it.

While they have no care but for their own safety, they warn the sailors of that danger it was impossible for them to have any other way foreseen in so good time; and by the notice they give of the approaching mischief, they amply repay the security, such as it is, that they obtain from the vessel: while the storm lasts, they never leave the ship; they get before it from the wind, and follow all its motions, but in such tempests as that we just escaped, the shelter is of little use to them. As soon as the calm returned with the dawn, those which had escaped the fury of the waves and winds, took wing, and we saw no more of them, except singly and accidentally in the mid air, as before; but the surface of the water, as we passed on, shewed us the ravage which the tempest had made on many, perhaps on the greatest part of them. The sailors, at the request of M—s, took up several dead ones that floated on the water, and these were all bruised and battered by the very violence of the storm.

The accounts of the master of the vessel, who had been used to the Danish seas, where he observed they were very frequent, shewed them of very accurate and distinct knowledge, as to the approaching hard weather, and as to its degree. He tells me, they are always on those seas informed of a growing wind by these messengers.

That

that if it be slight, they only settle upon the water, instead of keeping in the air ; but if harder, they never fail to take shelter about the ship.

* * *

L E T T E R L V.

I Write to you, my dear ——, from Venice. It is with a sort of secret pride I tell you so. I congratulate myself that I am here. I begin to feel a new joy in every thing that occurs to me. It is impossible for me to tell you, how much I am rejoiced that I undertook the tour. You know I was irresolute about it ; I was even dissatisfied, as my letters told you, with the first three or four stages. You have a right to know, that I see it now in another light. Upon my truth I would not have omitted it for half my fortune. But this is impertinent.

I am at once charmed and astonished with this place : it is one of the largest, and beyond a doubt, it is the most extraordinary city on the whole earth, if it may be allowed me to use that term in speaking of a place, which, in my mind, rather stands upon the sea.

I embarked early this morning at Padua in a handsome kind of boat, (a burcello is the term for it) and came down the Breul so happily and swiftly, that though it is now but barely evening, I have had time to look about me, and you see can venture to write you my observations. Does the air of Italy inspire me, or what is this ? I ne-

ver felt such spirits, such joy of heart before ; I have an unextinguishable ardour for the seeing every thing ; I have courage to write to you, and think it hardly requires consideration.

The vessel we came in was a very pretty thing in its kind : we had a large room in the middle, well ornamented with carvings and gildings. We were drawn a part of the way, as far as Fusino, by a horse ; from hence to Venice we were towed by means of a much lesser boat, a remullio, in which there were only six rowers.

The villas belonging to the noble Venetians, which shewed themselves on either hand as we fell down the river, gave a very beautiful prospect : I admired all of them ; but in some the genius of Palladio distinguished itself so obviously and so gloriously, even to the distant and the passing eye, that more than admiration was paid to them by mine. I reverence Palladio. I have no where seen so much of him, as within my two last stages. I esteem him vastly higher than I could do, while I was acquainted with him only in idea, and I see that when I have more opportunities of contemplating his works, I shall esteem him yet more.

They pointed out to me, as we passed by, one very noble edifice, they called it the *Albero de Oro*, and told me a most singular incident in its history. It belongs to one of the family of the Grimani. A possessor of it, some time ago, had the itch of play (at that time almost as universal in Venice as it is now in London) that he would risque every thing for which he could find a stake. His fortune, on this principle, underwent a strange variety

variety of changes: sometimes he was the richest; often he was one of the poorest, of the Venetian noblesse. A bad run of luck had at one time stripped him of every thing but this palace. When he made the stake of this, he reserved one favourite tree: he lost: the tree was worth nothing in the middle of another man's garden; he staked that too against a very moderate sum: he won: the run of fortune changed from this hazard: he continued successful till, before he got up, he found himself possessed again of every thing that he had lost, and a very considerable part of the personal estate of his antagonist. The tree yet stands to commemorate the accident, and has from it the name of Albero d'Oro, which is also continued in the whole palace.

How I deviate into trifles! But you will excuse the fulness of a joyous heart. I am for telling you all that pleases me in hearing. Venice does not stand upon the Continent: it is five miles from land, and is situated in the middle of I know not how many lagunes, or watery salt marshes. The lagunes have originally been marshy grounds, but of different composition; part of the earth has been soft, and part harder: the soft portion has been washed away by the sea in tides and storms; the harder has remained in a kind of islands. These have been rendered fertile by the quantities of mud and sea-weeds thrown from time to time upon them; and on these little specks of dirt in the vast Adriatic, stands Venice.

The first use that was made of them, was no better than the making them serve for the seat of huts built by the fishermen of Padua, who em-

ployed themselves to advantage in this part of the gulph. To what mean and infamous origins may the greatest things have owed their original. The invasion of the Goths drove numbers of families from Padua, and other neighbouring parts of Italy, to secure themselves on these little islands. Venice was then founded on seventy-two of them, but it has been extended greatly since, and a large number more are taken in. There never was indeed so favourable a situation for security against all kinds of enemies. Armies by land cannot come near them, nor have fleets at sea any greater advantage. The shoals are so numerous, and the entrance into the lagunes so intricate and difficult, that the city is inaccessible ; and though a very precious morsel, has never yet been walled or fortified, but, safe in its situation alone, has defied all attempts. It is between twelve and thirteen hundred years since this flourishing city was founded; and in the midst of all the ravages of war on the Continent, and all the changes in places that have been the seats and subjects of it in that time, Venice has not only been at all times safe, but it has never been besieged.

They tell me, that the prospect of this city from the land is a very fine one ; but nothing can equal the beauty of it, as one approaches from the sea. The houses are all founded on piles driven into the bottom ; and as most of them stand immediately on the water, it has the appearance of a city rising up out of the sea, and the little islands that are covered with buildings, afford the prospect of so many floating towns.

Venice

Venice is a considerably large city ; its circumference cannot be less than seven miles. The water every where washes the lower parts of the houses, and the canals are all of parallel breadth, and all of them are defended at their entrance by forts; so that large ships cannot come at all near ; and the smaller inlets are not only defended in the same manner, but are so intricate, that vessels of a proportional bigness cannot be steered in with tolerable safety by any but their own pilots. The lagunes or canals are separated from the sea by a land bank of forty miles extent, and at five miles distance from the city. Upon the whole, whether we consider the city in regard to security or beauty, there is no one in the world that can be compared with it.

With all this elegance on the prospect, Venice is not so perfectly fine when one is in it. I have indeed seen but little of it yet, and have no right to determine of the whole ; but it appears to me that there is not the greatest regularity or form in its several parts. The streets are very clean and delicate, but they are narrow and winding : the buildings, in many places at least, are lofty and beautiful. I have taken a cursory view of those along the grand canal. This runs through the middle of the city, and the houses about it have all the appearance of palaces. The bridges, as you will easily imagine, are numerous in a place where the canals run through the streets : they are built of a white stone, and make a very beautiful figure ; but they are dangerous in a very great degree, or at least they would be so to a people less sober than the Venetians. The stone they are built of is hard and polished ; so

that it is very slippery, and there are no rails to them. The people are aware of the danger, and to a proverb advise one another to beware of four P's; a nobleman, a bridge, a whore, and a parson: they have the modesty to call the noblesse *pantaloons*: the names of the other three objects of caution, you know, are in their language, *putane*, *prete*, and *pietra biana*, alluding to the stone of which the bridges are made.

I had imagined, by the name of these canals, that they were of the same kind with those of Holland, where, though they run through a street, there is always a broad space for people to walk upon; but it is quite otherwise: the canal reaches from one row of the houses to the other, and takes up the whole room of the street. What streets there are, are on the little islands, which are quite built over, and these are, as I observed to you, narrow and disagreeable; but they are all paved with the same white stone with that of the bridges. There is, I fancy, a good deal of the disagreeable at Venice, amidst all its beauty and splendor. The evening is now cool, and the day has not been hot, yet the canal in the place where I lodge stinks very much. I enquired of the people whether it always did so, and whether the others also stunk in the same manner: the answer was, that they were offensive sometimes, but they did not perceive any such thing now; I find, therefore, they are indeed offensive enough occasionally.— Have I not wrote a great deal to you, for one who has hardly been two hours in the city? After tomorrow I shall be fraught with more; till then,

L E T.

LETTER LVI.

I have just escaped a danger, which I wonder the Venetians, who are sufficiently sensible of it, have not added to their four cautions; a storm. It alarmed me the more, as I had no apprehension or idea of it. I was on the water in one of their gondolas; but in order to explain this to you, who, I think, have not been at Venice, I ought to tell you both what their water and their gondolas are: the water then, or, as they indifferently call it, the lagune, or lagunes (for the plural and singular number equally well expresses it) is a broad surface, but of very unequal depth; in part it is made up of shallows, in part of canals; these run through the several parts of the general bed, and the Venetians know where, but it would not be easy for a stranger to distinguish it. Their goadola is a very long and a very narrow boat, with two rowers, one at the head and the other at the stern, extremely expeditious, but of all water carriages the least qualified for bad weather.

The whole surface of the lagune was covered with these while I was out: I was admiring the agility and address of my own and of the other gondoliers that passed us: you would think their vessels unhandy, by reason of their great length; but it is amazing with what skill they steer clear of one another, and how close and finely they turn the corner of a canal. The multitudes of these all in motion at the same time; the glowing of the setting sun on the surface of the water, and the lustre which it gave to the buildings, were a kind of transport to me who had seen, nor had indeed conceived

ceived no idea of such a sight: In a moment all was bustle and confusion : we were far out, and our gondoliers were some of the first that took the alarm. There is a frame of wood in the middle of the boat, covered with black bays ; we were sitting in this, when the pleasant looks of our rowers were changed into those of confusion and terror ; the tilt, if I may so call it, of the place where we sat, was thrown off in a moment, and they were bustling back to the city without our bidding. We saw every body else in the same alarm, and we began to hear a whistling of the wind over our heads, and soon after to see the surface of the water rise into large waves. While we had our eyes upon the rest of the boats, they were all got into their places in the city ; the water, from being covered with them, was clear in a few minutes, and we, who were farther off, found the effects. The storm was far from violent, but we were in the most imminent danger. Our boatmen's terror, added not a little to mine. M——s is a strange creature ; he seems insensible of danger ; but he acknowledges, he is glad we are within doors, and all well.

You will laugh at my terrors on so ridiculous an occasion ; for to you, who are not here, I know it will appear such. It is over, and I will endeavour to give you some better entertainment. When I told you the bridges of Venice were of white stone, and had no rails, I should have excepted the Rialto. I had indeed reserved that for a particular examination, and a particular description. The principal canal runs in the figure of an inverted S : beside this, there is a large canal, distinguished by the name of Regio ; but

but this is strait; the others have their course, like the veins in the body, and run through all the streets. The bridges over these are from street to street, and are not in so small a number as five hundred: they consist usually of one arch, and the ascent to them is by steps. The Rialto or great bridge at Venice, is very different from all these; it is thrown over the middle of the great canal: it is built of very fine white marble, and though ninety five foot in length, and over so considerable a water, consists also but of one arch. There are two rows of shops and small houses upon it, covered with lead. The Venetians are very proud of this structure, and they have reason: they talk much of the immense expence at which it was built, and alledge, that it has its foundation on no fewer than ten thousand piles of wood.

I was led to the great landing place facing St. Mark's. The doge's palace, when we begin the survey here, presents itself on the right; and on the left are the apartments of the procurators of Venice, in the old Procurazie. Almost close to the water's edge, there stand two large and noble columns of granite; they are distant from one another nearly the whole breadth of the piazza; they cannot be less than seventy foot in height. On the top of one of them is placed the Venetian Lion; and on the other, a faint of the name of Theodore, once the patron of the city, but long since degraded from that honour. The lion is an odd beast; he has wings; the posture is couchant; and under one of his paws is an open book. Upon a nearer examination, you find he is looking over St. Mark's gospel.

In the other paw he has a naked sword. The saint is in compleat armour. It is not easy to find on what foundation it was that St. Theodore obtained the honour of this habit; but be that what it would, the dress has cost him all his glory: The patron of the Genoese, the old enemies of Venice, is a St. George; and this Theodore had so much of the martial appearance of that dragon-killer, that it was not judged proper to continue him the rank or title of their protector.

The cathedral of St. Mark has given me vast satisfaction. You are not to imagine from this, my dear —, that it is the most compleat, or the most elegant edifice you have ever heard of; it is very far from that character. Ovid, in describing the palace of the sun, tells us that the workmanship excelled the materials; it is not exactly so in St. Mark's at Venice: the materials are august and elegant in the highest degree; but I hardly know what to say of the putting them together. Its period is of the eleventh century. It was built by Greek architects, sent for out of their own country for that purpose. It is neither Gothic nor regular; in short it is, with all its splendor and magnificence, neither one thing nor another. To give you any tolerable idea of it, I must say that it consists of several of the regular parts of architecture, very irregularly and injudiciously put together.

The church is nearly square in figure; it is considerably high; and one great inconvenience of the form of it is, that it is dark. The columns are many of them of the Greek orders; but they are not right either in the measures or the disposition.

disposition. On the front there are a vast number of small pillars ; in some places four or five little ones placed upon a large one. The roof has five domes ; the middle one much larger than the others. Those who have examined the Grecian churches say, there is some resemblance in it to the contrivance and architecture of them : to my eye, I never saw so strange a mixture of something and nothing in any place.

Whatever judgment may be passed upon the taste seen in the outside of the church, all must agree in allowing it magnificent to a very uncommon degree within. The edifice is totally of marble ; the walls, the roof, the floor, are all covered with it within ; and there can no where be met with such a variety of the several kinds of the beautiful and valuable marbles together. The Mosaic work is in vast profusion, and all of it executed with infinite accuracy. You know it is not a species of ornament for which I have any peculiar taste ; but whatever I thought of the art employed in the arranging the several pieces, I was in raptures with what I saw of nature in the different veinings of the stones. M—s was in yet greater transport ; it was with great pride of heart that he pointed out to me in the several parts of one or other of these works, all the marbles that we read of as esteemed among the antients : in one place he shewed me a plate of the Phengites, honey-coloured, and as transparent as amber ; we saw the cement through it. In another, the fine Parian kind justified all the old writers have said of its lustre, though too much for our Carrara, supposed the same, though truly known to them by the names of the Lunense and Troadense. He turned

turned my eyes upon the pavement, to shew me the bluish glossy marble, which they called the Numidian. In a part of one of the north walls he pointed out some blocks, of the black sparkling kind they called the Lucullean. Near it, confounded by the modern workmen, though distinguished by nature and by the more accurate eye of the antients, the dull dead black, which they called the Chian, and the Obsidian stone ; and at a small distance from it the deeper but glossier basaltes. All these were understood by the modern Greeks, who built the edifice as the same. My companion was very liberal of his fools and scoundrels to these people, and shewed me the characters by which they differed. I should have been of the opinion of those he rallied, and called them all the same ; but the differences, when he had explained them to me, appeared obvious enough, and absolutely essential.

His eye was carried up to a part of the cieling, to shew me the bright green marble, distinguished by them under the name of the Lacedemonian kind. I did not imagine there was any such, but it appeared pure, almost transparent, and wholly without veins ; I have hardly seen a jasper finer. Among the common squares of the pavement, he shewed me the green and white marble, the Augustan and Tiberian kind of the old Romans ; and among the Mosaics of another part, he shewed me one after another, all blended under the common name of Verde antique by the Cicerone, the black ophites of the antients, so called from its black spots on a green ground ; the white ophites, so denominated from its veins of that colour ; the tephria, or grey ophites, of the same times, variegated with black spots, as

the

the first ; and a number of other distinct species, unnamed by them, and by every body else also.

I was astonished at the Theban marble of the Romans, veined with gold on purple. The Oriental alabaster, transparent, and full of veins and zones like those of the onyx, explained to me what the old writers meant, who talked of pavements of the onyx ; they call this marble figuratively by the name of that gem, from its resemblance. Beside the purple and white porphyry, known universally by that name, he shewed me the several species in which, under an equal hardness, and with the advantage of an equal polish, there were disclosed veins of gold or of green, and some of a glossy black, that had a lustre which the eye hardly bore. I was surprised to see among the most beautiful kinds, one which he pointed out to me as the common moor-stone of our western counties : you see it hewn out into steps, and other parts of buildings, in London ; but it is impossible for you to conceive how bright and how elegant, as well as singular it is, when polished. The common red granite had its place with great success among the others ; and with it, as in the other cases, several evidently distinct species, which have not been named either by the antients or moderns, though they occur frequently in buildings, and in these ornaments.

There is an air of grandeur in the several parts of the inside of this building, exclusively of the ornaments, which is greatly superior to that without. These Mosaics which we had been examining (for the several parts, of which they were composed) demanded a second view to be taken
in

in the whole: they appear extremely different in this examination, and they are evidently of very different dates and periods: nothing can be more ridiculous or absurd than the old ones; but some of the more modern, which are after designs of Titian, deserve a very different character. They are principally scripture stories, or legends of their saints; but there are some allegorical figures whimsical enough. Among the rest, I observed two fat lions in the water, and near them, two lean ones on land. The meaning of this was an admonition to the Venetians, whose ensign is the figure of that creature, that while they employ themselves at sea, they shall be rich and powerful, but if they meddle at land, they will become poor and despicable. The piece which pleased me most of any thing I have seen in this kind, is a figure placed over the chief entrance into this church; it is done after a design of Titian's, and expresses an old man in a priest's habit, with his hands extended, and over his head there appears a single hand in the act of blessing him. There is a dignity and ease in this figure, which are very commanding. They have some serpentine marble pillars here of antient workmanship: they pretend they belonged to Solomon's temple.

But of all the antiquities preserved here, and in some other parts of Venice which I have already visited, nothing has affected me with greater contempt for the pretences of priestly knowledge, than the madonas of St. Luke's painting: they have one of them in this church, which they shew in a frame, covered with glass, and only at a respectful distance. The expression (for it is that they use) is not without its meaning. To preserve that respect that is paid to them, they must

must not be seen any nearer : they are unluckily painted in oil, a thing that was not in custom quite so early as the days of that evangelist. Upon the whole, if we allowed these pictures to be genuine, all we should learn from them would be, that St. Luke was a very bad painter, or the lady not a very great beauty. They seem to pick up the dirtiest and oldest Madona's they can find, and when they have properly framed and glazed them, give them the name of the saint, to enhance their value.

Whatever contempt the judicious eye must treat these pretended antiquities with, there are some others about the same church, for which all his praise will be too little. I know you have not seen Venice. I do not know whether you have heard of the four antique horses there : they are the greatest remain of the antique statuary that I have seen, or expect to see, of their kind : they are of brass gilt ; the gilding is as old as the figures ; there is but little of it now to be seen in any degree of splendor, the rest is greenish or blackish, as it is more or less rusted. There is a knowledge and accuracy in the design of them that astonishes one : the execution is without a blemish ; they are supposed to be the workmanship of the immortal Lysippus : they stand over the middle gate, and there is an air of nature, and of fire in them, that amazes even the most ignorant observers. They were brought to Venice in 1201, from the plunder of Constantinople. Morice Zeno, first Podesta of the Republick, sent them to Veacie four years after. They were originally placed on Nero's Circus ; Constantine removed them, among other things of infinite value, and almost infinite in number, to Constanti-

noble, when he removed the seat of empire thither. The Venetians sufficiently know their value, and so do others. It is a remarkable transaction, that Francis Cavara, lord of Padua, who lorded it over Venice too, at the time of that city's troubles with Genoa, once had the boldness to demand these horses, before he would admit the ambassadors should be received at his court. How strange are the vicissitudes of human fortune ! this was that Francis, afterwards put to death by the Venetians, in violation of the word of honour given by their general, and not at all to their own credit. But I ramble from my purpose. The gates of St. Mark's are brass, and answer to the superb materials and work within. Nothing, however, astonished me more than the pavement of the dome : we discovered it by an accident ; the people who shew the church, pass it over slightly, but it is, at least, of a piece with all the rest in pomp ; it is so dirty, that had not M—s peeped very closely upon it in his examination of the marbles, we had not regarded it : But what was my astonishment, to see, that we were treading upon an assemblage, not only of antique marbles of the most superb kinds, but of Jaspers, and the true Lapis Lazuli ; there are many single pieces of these valuable stones in this pavement, that would be, at this time, esteemed at a vast rate ; nothing ever surprised me equally to the neglect in which so strange a profusion of pomp and expence is left to be forgotten. The materials are not all that is to be admired in this pavement : the workmanship, whatever may be said by people of the more delicate taste, as to the propriety and gusto, is laboured to a degree meriting the value of such materials as those on which it has been employed. The stones of which this

this old pavement is composed, are not laid in squares, they are cut in form for various figures, in which they are laid out, and together make representations of several things that have an odd appearance ; and as those who would add to the veneration in which it is held among the churchmen, would persuade us of a mystical meaning. They have a tradition, that it is the work of a person who had the gift of prophecy : they call him Abbot Joachim, and they say that he chose this mystical way of delivering his predictions, and that there is not any figure, or assemblage of figures, which do not relate to something that has since, or that will hereafter happen. However this may be, this pavement joins with every thing else one sees, in countenancing the assertion, that the Venetians had determined this should be the finest church in the world ; they have done their part towards it : expence has not been spared, nor have materials of the most costly kind been wanting. One laments, that with all these, taste is so requisite : that the want of this single circumstance shou'd have rendered the whole profusion, and all the care of collecting, fruitless. It is certain, that St. Mark's shews as many fine things as any church in Italy, but none ever dreamed of calling it the finest church there.

The expence of the structure has not been all that has tended to enrich it ; the plunder of Constantinople by the Franks and Venetians, brought home an infinite quantity of treasure, and of curiosities, of which St. Mark's has had the greatest share. There are a number of vases of glorious workmanship, which they owe to that expedition.

In the space between the façade and the church, there are a multitude of monuments, some of them very elegant ; and beside these, there are innumerable sculptures and mosaicks in the portico's, some of them contemptible enough, but others that are fine. I am not, in general, fond of shew, but, I must confess, there was something in the pall of the great altar in this church that struck me strangely : it is of massy gold, inlaid with jewels, and enamelled with several scripture stories ; it is the richest thing Italy has to boast, and they tell us, was near a hundred and fifty years in making.

There are pictures by Titian, not a few, and most of them of the highest finished that have come from his hand, but they are not well seen ; there never was a building in which the windows were worse disposed. Old Palma has also some remains preserved here, and there are some of Tintoret's, esteemed the best that have come from his pencil. The subject of the Mosaicks of the roof, is the life of St. Mark the evangelist, patron of Venice. They are well executed, and if they wanted in this particular, would be worthy notice merely on the account of the materials.

They preserve the remains of that saint here with great veneration ; but of all the holy reliks I have met with, scarce any has given me so much entertainment, as a piece of a common stone preserved here. It was a present from Michael Palleologus, and his empres Irene, so say the words of an antient Greek inscription preserved with it, and was the very rock out of which Moses produced water in the desart by a stroke of his wand. We were shewn a multitude of

of other reliques in the treasury, by people possessed with a strange veneration for them, and possessed also, as I have observed in all other cases, with the strange infatuation of not seeing, that those to whom they shew them, share none of their transports. I mentioned the Abbot Joachim a prophetick designer of events. They shewed us on the door of the treasury the portraits of St. Dominick and St. Francis, as like as if done from their faces by the most able limner, yet, as they assured us, executed by this prophetick spirit, many years before they were born. There are a multitude of very valuable antiques preserved within; but the greatest treasure, according to their own estimation, is their gospel of St. Mark, written, so they say, by his own hand. I saw it, but this, as all the other great curiosities, is shewn in a very reserved manner to strangers. It was barely opened, and that at a great distance. The letters seem almost entirely decayed, and the paper is worn to the thinness of a cobweb. I do not know with what judgment they use all this caution in this particular respect, but in most others it is the prudentest step in the world, for nothing but distance and darkness could prevent those who do not view them with eyes of enthusiasm, from discovering them to be counterfeits.

The library is a very noble sight. The disposition of the fabrick is elegant and proper, and the paintings and statues are all good: the manuscripts in the Greek and Eastern languages are numerous and valuable. In an adjoining chamber there are a great number of antiques, a legacy from a patriarch of Aquileia of the Grimani family. There have been considerable ad-

ditions to it since, but these are the capital things. There is a Ganymede in the talons of the Eagle, an inestimable piece of workmanship. I do not know, upon the whole, that I have ever met with greater pleasure in the examining a collection of this kind.

LETTER LVII.

THE Lombard architecture has something extremely singular in it : it seems to have borrowed from the Moorish and Arabesque, what gives it this singularity. I have stared at this in several buildings that I have lately seen, and would have described it to you, if I had perfectly known how to do it. The Doge's palace is generally called a Gothic structure, but it is more truly in the Lombard stile. There is nothing promising in the outside, but within there is a great deal of taste, as well as of magnificence. In the Inner Court there are three statues of the natural dimensions, two of them are of Adam and Eve ; and at the foot of the great stairs there are two Colossal figures, they are of Mars and Neptune : there is merit enough in them to give you curiosity to enquire who was the sculptor. The name is Sansovino, but I do not think equal to some of his works.

The great council-chamber is decorated with the pictures of all the Doges, except one. I was curious to know the meaning of a plain black board

board being placed in the stead of that, but on a nearer view there appeared an inscription which explained it. This was left for the place of Charles the first of Venice. The words declared that it should have been filled with the portrait of Falieri, who was beheaded in the first year of his administration.

Venice has been always famous for discovering plots, but one is suspicious, among the stories of so many, that some may have been made by the discoverers. Who can conceive, that a poor old creature of eighty-one, just advanced to the princely dignity, should conspire the destruction of the state? yet, certain it is, that the discovery of one of the most famous conspiracies, is that of this of Falieri, who having demanded justice of the senate, for a rape committed on his own lady by Michael Steno, was accused of having laid a plot for destroying the chief of the nobility, and enslaving the people; and was executed the same day, on the confession of an accomplice. He suffered just on the spot where, but so very short a time before, he had been crowned.

The chambers before the Senate-room are nobly furnished with paintings, all of them by the greatest hands, and all of them in character. The audience given to a Persian ambassador is a very fine piece. But I was in raptures with the single figure of the Doge Grimani, by Titian. He is represented in complete armour, praying to St. Mark. I have seen no piece of Titian's equal to this. Paul Veronese has been almost equally happy in a similar subject. The great Sebastian Venier, whom they used to stile the terror of the Turks, is represented on his knees before the

virgin. The blended greatness and humility in this figure are amazingly fine and expressive. The possessors of this valuable picture, have testified their respect, as well for the painting as the subject, by placing it directly over the throne in the Senate-room.

The Arsenal at Venice is a glorious sight. It is not less than three miles in circumference. It is the most amazing magazine, both for sea and land service, that I have ever seen. It is situated at the extremity of the city, that lies nearest the sea, and is surrounded with a wall. There are within this three large reservoirs, that have communication with one another, and all with the sea. These have workhouses all along their sides, and about them every way are the manufactures of ropes, arms, and other implements and utensils in the service of a fleet or camp, and magazines of the several materials that seem inexhaustible.

The Amciaglio last shewed us the amazing quantity of great and small arms, preserved in that perfect order which keeps them always ready for instantaneous service. It was a very glorious sight. This is the officer who has the honour of commanding the Bucentaur on the annual marriage of the Doge to the Adriatick : it is a singular thing in his office, that he is obliged to engage at the peril of his head, that no storm shall disturb the Adriatick on that day. This is an oath regularly taken ; but the solemnity is on Ascension-day, and it is a calm season. The convent of St. George is one of the noblest and most elegant structures in all Italy ; it is built on a plan of Palladio's : it has been a religious house of very early standing ; some of the Doges have

have retired to it, and particularly Peter Ziani, who after having set fire to it, and destroyed many of the religious in it, in vengeance for a son being killed by a dog belonging to the place, rebuilt it, and throwing off the purple, retired to it, and added greatly to its extent and possessions.

The church is full of noble monuments : the fathers shew the reliques of St. Stephen, the first christian martyr, which they hold inestimable. I was more pleased with a singularity in one of the tombs than with almost any thing I saw there. In the marble with which the Mausoleum of the Morosini family are commemorated, there are some accidental veins which carry a strange resemblance to certain animals and vegetables, perfectly the effect of accident, but so like that it extremely surprizes one. In the choir there is also a strange piece of curiosity, a carving in walnut-tree, the whole life of St. Benedict. It was executed by a youth of Dutch extraction.

One of the finest paintings I have seen is Paolo's marriage of Cana. It is in the Refectory. You know that painter took sanctuary at Venice on occasion of an unhappy accident ; it was during this time that he painted this picture. What will you say to hear that the price paid for doing one of the finest pictures in the world, was about an English shilling a day, and his victuals ?

The martyrdom of St. Stephen, and St. George killing the dragon, are also noble pieces, preserved here ; they are by Tintoret. The cieling of the library is finely painted, and the subjects properly chosen. The whole house, indeed, is

one of the most pompous and elegant, as well as
of the richest places I have seen, or that I expect
to see.

L E T T E R LVIII.

AT Venice one hardly sees the face of a woman that one may not have if one has a mind to it. You are not to suppose, from this, that all the Venetian women are whores, but whores are the only women at Venice who suffer one to see their faces. One sees whole companies of these at their doors and windows, painted and decorated to invite their customers; but it is a very unsafe traffick: there is no making a mistake about these ladies. I remember a young fellow of our acquaintance once picked up the dutchess of *** for a common prostitute, at one of the publick places, but here there is no possibility of such an error. In England, if I mistake not, the common women affect to dress like the people of fashion, and the people of fashion have too much complaisance not to return the compliment by dressing like them; so that it is not only the dutchess I have mentioned, whom one might mistake for one of them, nor, I think, is Fanny (does she yet live and shine?) the only one of her fraternity that one may take, at an Oratorio, for a dutchess. In Venice the women of this stamp wear the gaudiest colours, and shew their necks to a great depth; on the contrary, all the women of virtue go covered up with a veil, so as only to have room to peep out and see the

the way, and they are all habited in black : they are not behind-hand with the others, I am told, in the use of washes and paint, no one can hardly say to what purpose. At church nobody sees their faces, and in the Gondolas they are covered up. The young ones are put very early into monasteries, and are either taken out to be married, or take the veil without any farther acquaintance with the world.

In think, in England, we are geting apace into the making marriage a mere bargain : in Venice they have reduced it absolutely to that situation, and, I think, they have a merit, much greater than we can boast, in the confessing it. They do not pretend to any matter of choice or affection between the husband and the wife. The bride does not see the bridegroom till he is to be made so. The parents make the match, and they take care it shall be a rich one : after this, if he chance to like his wife, there is no harm done ; if not, it is just as easy on both parts. What is the lady's relief, indeed, I know not, but the husband keeps his courtezan, and custom has taught the wife to acquiesce in it : often they are very well acquainted.

It is not only the married men at Venice who have these private courtezans ; the boys are allowed them by their parents : a father, or even a good considerate lady mother, will provide for her son as soon as he discovers any inclination that way : the bargain is made with some poor neighbour, and an innocent daughter is purchased at a certain price, and at a stipulated allowance : the young men of fashion, all of them, have these, and those whose fortunes will not allow it, join

Join two, three, or four together in the purchase, and the expence of the support : the girl is kept as long as she is liked, or till the person marries, and then she sinks into one of the common class, and paints and dresses as they do.

You would imagine, from this, that the state of love here, tho' very favourable to the men, is limited in a very narrow verge with regard to the ladies ; but that does not seem absolutely to be the case. The masquerades here are things of which it is not impossible they may make their uses. After to-morrow is one of their publick rejoicing days, and I shall have an opportunity of giving you some more distinct account of their intriguing ; at least I suspect their frequent meetings of this sort are not without design ; but what is suspicion shall be certainty before I write.

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L E T T E R LIX.

I HAD set the masquerading of a private day but low in my esteem, in comparison of that during the Carnival ; but I am at such a distance in point of time from that it is impossible I should see it. I shall be in a very different part of the world by Christmas. I have seen only one of their lesser rendezvous's of this kind ; but I have enough. If the masqueraders of the Carnival afford more liberties than that from which I have returned, the masquerades of the Carnival are madness. These meetings are not, as with us, of a few people, and at a particular place : the whole

whole city is in masque, and in many places there is no passing for crouds. I do not know that they make any use of these meetings for the intent I imagined ; there hardly seems to be room for scheming or intriguing ; all is madnes : I will not deny but there is mirth and jollity, but so much folly and irregularity I never met with.

There is one circumstance, however, in which they are vastly better than our masquerades, which seem but a paltry copy of them. They put on a new form of mind with their new habit, and nothing remains of their original gravity, reserve or stateliness : in England we can, at all times, distinguish the people of great rank at a masquerade ; nothing is so common as to see a stately stalking awkward thing of fashion parading in one part of the room, or two or three of the same reserved appearance assembled in another, and nobody presuming to speak to them. These people deny themselves the pleasure of a masquerade, and prevent others from having it in that perfection on which its whole spirit depends ; but this is not the case at Venice : no people on earth are more jealous of their honour, or more proud of their rank than the Venetians on all other occasions, but at a masquerade it is forgot : every thing is upon the level. The habit of the nobleman, with them, is like that of the Domino with us, or rather, I should say, like what that of the Domino was with us, for now half the people in the place wear them. It is the dress that a person puts on who has a mind to be an idle spectator ; but then, as it is not reserved to the noblesse, but every man wears it who has a mind to be idle, no particular respect is paid to it, nor does any one guess, that any particular person

person whom he meets in it, has a right to respect barefaced.

There is another circumstance in which their masquerades also entirely take the superiority over ours: the characters are vastly more numerous than in ours, and every man acts up to that which he assumes: if you speak to a harlequin, you find him as whimsical as a Frenchman, and as full of blunders as an Irishman: the lawyer is a disputant, and the physician a pedant. There is a great deal of spirit in the discourse: those who are not qualified to support it properly, decline it, but even that with some excuse in character. Whenever you meet with one who will talk, you are sure to be entertained. I have heard more wit in this day of Jubilee, than I ever met with in a week, either here or in any other place. It is odd to see so grave a people as the Venetians naturally are, become alert and spirited immediately on hiding their faces; but it is so. One sees something like this just at the entering one of our own masquerades, but that sort of pleasure and jollity, which goes off after a few minutes with us, lasts with them throughout the time.

Their operas, comedies, and other publick diversions, are all in their splendor, also at these masquerade times. I have heard some exquisite musick at one of them, but to me there is something of ease and nature in the Gondoliers singing, that has a charm beyond it, or beyond anything. You will understand me, and perhaps agree with me, when you recollect the Scotch airs of our own country, and the Ellen a Roon of the Irish: they seem native, and there is a grace and

and ease in them, the defect of which cannot be supplied by any thing adventitious. Nothing can be so contemptible as the comedies here. Their Doctor, their old Rich Culley, their Harlequin and their Sharper are standing characters, and they speak much the same stuff, be the play what it will; for the rest, it is well that people saw the play I was present at in masks, for it would not have been easy for the women to have stood it barefaced: such a heap of dirty and unmeaning obscenity I never heard, or met with on any occasion.

If I had been tired with the sameness of what I had seen abroad, the diversions within doors did not at all relieve me from the disgust. There was still less to be done at these entertainments, people paying too much attention to them to take much notice of one another. I had by no means found my expectations of intrigue and raillery answered abroad or here, but I had not yet seen all. Some people who were over me at the play, talked of going to a Ridotto. I expected it would have been necessary to change my dress, but I followed them, and found they entered as they were. The Ridotto's in Venice are gaming-houses: people make those in England so, but it is the scheme and intent here, and they do it without pulling off the mask. I found we were in the house of some nobleman. A person of fashion kept the bank, and I followed my companions up to it, and played. I was not suffered to lose a great deal, for the master of the ceremonies dismissed us a few minutes after I joined the party: this is a privilege they take when they think proper, and you generally see every face discontented, but their own. I do not

know

know how they manage it, but themselves seem almost the only people who are winners.

While I was at the table I observed, among the crowd that were about me, a young fellow of spirit addressing and teasing a woman who seemed a very agreeable one, and who only seemed out of humour with him, for she did not chuse to avoid him. The moment I broke up I saw two or three more such parties : I began to discover, that these were the places of that intrigue which I had looked for in vain, but that because I had looked for it under wrong circumstances. I kept my eye upon the women till I singled out one of a charming figure, and great sprightliness. I put on a French freedom, and threw myself into her company. She rallied me very prettily, but she received me : she heard me say all the soft, and some of the warm things that a spirit of intrigue could dictate : she laughed at me, but still she heard me. I waited on her to the place of sweet-meats : I courted, I complimented, and I intreated in the best language I was master of, and I began to be not utterly without hopes of succeeding : I was very earnest for an appointment, and was not without expectation of it, when M—s, who would not let me go alone to a place of this kind, as he had no taste of relish for it himself, came up to me with great distress and terror of countenance, to tell me that this was a woman of the first fashion, whose husband was present, and who was, at this time, watched by a couple of bravoes, who would murder me the instant they found an opportunity. I was laughing when M—s pointed to the author of his information, a person in a genteel habit in that part of the room where he had been standing, and the

the person bowed by way of assent. I left the lady for a moment to hear the reality of this, and was so thoroughly convinced of it, that I thanked my unknown friend with great sincerity, and returned to her no more. I could distinguish by her manner, that she was dissatisfied with losing me; she made some tolerably free attempts to get me back, but in vain. I thanked my stars for my escape; but what do you imagine was the truth of the case? Humbugging is as much a custom in Venice as it was in London: I had only hunted down the game for another. I saw my excellent good friend take my place with the lady; and I now find his admonition was only a Mohawk story to get her away from me. The race of bravoes and assassins has been many years extinct at Venice, and the whole was a scheme of an idle and amorous Italian, to get a woman who was in a humour to intrigue to change her object: I was fairly taken in, and was the only person who had occasion to be out of humour. My mistress had her gallant; and, if I am rightly informed of the character of the Venetian ladies, that is all that was necessary; one gallant does as well as another. Poor M—'s confesses great indignation at having been made the dupe to such an enterprise. He was very happy in the opinion of having returned me the obligation of saving a life; but his indignation is not less than his joy was at the first. He has made me very merry with his curses upon all whores, intrigues and liars; but he advises me very honestly to avoid a scrape of this kind for the future, for the next may be real.

LETTER LX.

I Am grown extremely pleased with water carriage. A bark has carried me along the pleasantest scene imaginable to Ferrara. I do not know whether the heat does not add to the pleasure one has in this kind of conveyance, under the reflexion of the disadvantages that would attend any other. I have no great joy in Ferrara; it seems a desolate place. I thought Padua but very ill inhabited; but the waste street in Padua is better than the best I have yet seen in Ferrara. The pope is not a good master: while it was under the command of the dukes of Ferrara, princes of the house of Este, there was not, they tell me, a more flourishing city in Italy; but there is a strange change in the face of affairs since the change of the possessor; more depends on this than one would imagine. The country about Ferrara is richer from nature, than any part of Italy that I have yet seen; but no body thinks it worth while to cultivate it. The city is large and handsome, and well situated, but no body cares to live in it. This is the present state of it, and there is no visible cause for it but that which I have assigned; a cause better understood, perhaps, under the popish government than out of it.

Though the streets of Ferrara are thinly inhabited, there do not want objects for the stranger's curiosity. The great street is a very broad and pompous one, and at the end of it one sees a little tower where they keep guard: it is not particular in any thing but from its situation; it has

a very

a very good effect. There is a street of as large extent and regular buildings that crosses this; the views are elegant, and there is no body to interrupt the view of them: I never saw a scene of such desolation. You will recollect the difference between the Strand in church-time on a Sunday, and the Strand on any other day of the week; but the difference is less than between the appearance of the streets of Ferrara, and those of any other place you have seen.

The churches are not so much ornamented as is generally the case in those of Italy; but they have that which is worth seeing: the dome is a good building: over-against it I was stopped to see two statues, and perused them with great pleasure; they are equestrian ones, and are of bronze: they commemorate two men of quality of the Ferrarese family, one of whom is called in the inscription, *ter pacis auctor*. The church of St. Maria in Vado is a good one, and I was greatly pleased with the paintings in it; the more so, as additionally to their merit, they had the singularity of being by hands we are little acquainted with. There is in particular a large history by Carpaccio, painted in 1508, and in a very beautiful manner. In the church of St. Francesco we were shewn a chapel, painted in fresco, in 1524, by Benuvento de Garofalo. I should have taken it for one of Raphael's. One would call it one of his; there is so much of his spirit and manner in it, that the mistake almost does honour to the person who makes it. Bouen, a name one scarce hears of, has immortalised himself by a painting in the same church, a miracle of St. Anthony of Padua. It is pity but the subject were worthy the execution. The story

is a miser dying : his heart was found among his money : the saint puts the heart in its place again, and restores the man to life. It were good natured to suppose these representations allegorical ; but the mob would murder the man who should presume to doubt that they were real. The priests do not believe any thing of these absurdities : they have sometimes been so free to confess it was to deceive the vulgar, and that it answered a good end, in keeping up their spirit of devotion : but they seem to forget the admonition of St. Paul, " that men are not to do evil that good may come of it." In the Scula della Madonna della Circumcisione, so called from a picture there by Lewis Carrachi, I had the greatest pleasure ; it was in studying this famous piece. There are some others very worthy notice ; but this exceeds, I think, all I have seen by the same hand.

The palace of Diamonds was so sounding a name, that not intending to stay any great time in this desolate city, I hurried over some things very worthy a longer attention, in order to get at it. It has its name, not from any thing that I had imagined, or that you naturally would imagine from the import of so sounding a word : there is a sort of rustic on the outside, in which the several stones project in the manner of diamonds : this has given it the title. Within it is not worth notice.

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LET.

LETTER LXI.

BEFORE I mention to you any thing that regards this place, let me tell you of an incident at the last, which I have escaped by accident, and which makes me now shudder at the recollection. A poor Swiss is just arrived here with a dislocated shoulder, and in a miserable condition in the other. He has suffered a discipline which I had as much title to, and to which it would have been easy to have condemned me.

It is a custom in the towns of France and Italy, to give in one's name to the governor. It is a piece of troublesome impertinence, and one generally gives in a wrong one. I have in most places made use of yours. M—s, who is as well covered from curiosity under his own as any other, has generally, I believe always, used it. He would have escaped, therefore, a very horrible accident, under which I know not how it happened that I did not fall at Ferrara. The giving in one's name is a matter of mere ceremony, and the formalities that follow are not regarded. We had a permission to stay ten days at Ferrara; but not intending any stay at all, we had never looked into it, otherwise it seems we should have seen the order. The poor Swiss had, according to the common custom in other places, also given in a wrong name, and had as little knowledge of a regard to the matter of the permission as we. In his papers, which he had laid in his window, there appeared a commission for some trifling affair, with a name expressed in it different from that which he had given in as being his. The

person who had made the discovery, read over the governor's permit to him, the form of which expressed, that if any person should give in a false name he should pay fifty crowns, and have three jerks of the cord. Far from being possessed of the fifty crowns, the poor devil had not the five for which the accuser promised to drop his evidence, and smother the matter. He was had before the governor; the fact was proved, and the not being able to pay the five, added to the severity of the punishment. His arms were drawn behind him, and a pully fastened to his wrists; he was then drawn up by a cord to the height of twenty-five foot, and let down again, and stopped with a jerk. This was repeated three times, and then the poor creature suffered to go about his business. There is something in the wanton cruelty of this, that shocks one. I have escaped, without deserving that good fortune any more than the Swiss, and I have made him a present of what would have been my fine, which to people of fortune is fifty crowns extraordinary in place of the punishment. But the storm is past, and I write to you from port. I write from Ravenna, once a port, in another sense of the word, but now no more so, nor carrying the marks that it ever was. We have heard much of the encroachments of the sea in some parts, and of the increase of the land in others; but I know no where that one sees it more distinctly and perfectly than here. Would it not surprise you to think of one's coming to a famous port by land, from an impossibility of getting at it any other way? But this is the case. A branch of the Po brought us to Alberto, within ten miles of this place; the rest we were obliged to ride, and that disagreeably enough,

enough, through an English rather than an Italian country in appearance, at least nature has left it such. It is all rich to a great degree, but miserably uncultivated. I smiled, as we approached Ravenna, to hear an observation of my friend M—s: he is fond, in the greatest degree, of shewing his discernment; and he took occasion to tell me, that he knew this land to have been once overflowed by the sea, by the plants which grew on it.

"It is not only, said he, the absolute inhabitants of salt water that mark the places where it comes: its influence reaches many miles within the land, and discloses itself in others; and there never fail to be marks of its having covered a spot, though now dry, in the peculiar vegetables which nature produces on it." He proceeded to tell me, that he found the influence of the salt water in our own country always reached four or five miles, and shewed itself in the plants which grew in that extent, as well on the highest hills, as in the level ground: "In Essex, said he, it is not only when we approach the sea coast, and see the sea wormwood and sea orraches growing by the sides of ditches, that we know the water to be salt; the peculiar trefoils on the hills, and a number of other small, as well as larger plants, speak our coming within the distance of so many miles as I have mentioned. And as to grounds at some time overflowed, and yet within the distance I have allotted, the sea grasses and the sea plantain, among a number of other equally peculiar plants, never fail to declare it. I have for these two miles, concluded my sagacious friend, met with the remoter inhabitants of the neighbourhoods of the sea, whence I know we cannot be

more than five or six miles from it ; at this time there are about me all the common natives of dry deep marshes, and once overflowed countries." I smiled at the perplexities into which the fondness for a peculiar study will lead men, in recounting its advantages : but I had no reason ; we were in a very little time at Ravenna ; and history declares, that what my friend conjectured from the products of the soil, was in reality once the situation of the place.

Ravenna, once the most famous of all the Roman ports on the Adriatic, is now an inland town. It is in all parts at least four miles from the sea. Ravenna, which Augustus made one of the stations of the Roman gallies ; how does one stare to look about it, and seek for the sea in vain ! Ravenna, founded, as we are told, like Venice, on piles in the midst of the sea, now stands upon very good ground ; and the land between it and the Adriatic, is some of the richest and most fruitful in the country !

It is an odd sight, to be led to view a haven in the middle of a good field, yet this is the case with that, in which the naval force of the conquerors of the world used to ride. All is dry land for miles about it ; but the form of the place is easily traced, and there yet remain even the iron rings to which the vessels used to be fixed. At about two miles from the town are the remains of the famous light-house or pharos. There is probability of their having selected a higher spot of ground than the common level to build this upon, but no such matter appears at present. The foundations are covered to the depth of some feet with earth, and yet they are

no more than upon a level with the fields. This earth about the pharos, as well as that which fills up what was once so considerable a haven, must have been originally brought thither by the sea, which, as it has washed up more and more of it, has retired farther and farther from the place. It is singular, that this is the richest land about the country, though all is tolerably rich : and it is remarkable also, that the vegetables which grow in the neighbourhood of the sea, and which generally indicate a barren land, are the produce of this. One stares to see in every part of this fertile spot, vegetables that elsewhere distinguish a poor one ; but they are luxuriant to a surprising degree.

The remains of the pharos speak it to have been a very considerable building ; Pliny mentions it as such ; and its important use demanded that it should be no less. The diameter of the part of it which yet remains is seven and thirty foot. The Romans, at the time when it was erected, were sufficiently masters of proportion ; and we may know from this what it was.

I have been viewing the environs of a city once surrounded with the ocean (tho' now at so considerable a distance from it) with a singular pleasure. Every thing joins in attesting the truth ; and my laugh at my good friend, who now points me out more and more proofs of the fact from the vegetable produce of the soil, is turned to a kind of veneration. This is a use of botany, that a man less than a master of it would not have thought of ; but it is certain, and may at times prove important,

* * *

L E T.

LETTER LXII.

RAVENNA, so celebrated of old, and which, in commemoration of those times, has at this period the epithet of Antica, is no inconsiderable town. It is a city, the see of an archbishop, the residence of a cardinal legate, and the capital of the province of Pomania. Though it does not stand as formerly, like Venice, in the sea, it is encompassed by two little rivers, and has the Adriatic within four miles of it. Though it is of some consequence at this time, it is hastening to lose it; and has indeed lost so much of that it once possessed, that one can scarce believe it the city one reads of so flourishing a few ages ago. The church is a very ill master: the towns I have yet seen have all been declining from the time in which they fell under its jurisdiction, but none more than Ravenna. Though it stands on some extent of ground, the buildings are in general mean, and the streets, even the best of them, but very thinly peopled.

The cathedral is an old Gothic structure, but with nothing very elegant about it: the most elegant thing in it is the double row of pillars on each side of the nave supporting the roof; they are of Grecian marble, and make a grand appearance. The roof is Mosaic, and the materials are good, but the design has no great merit; the floor also is Mosaic, but there is less merit in the design in this than above. There are few structures of this kind, however, that will not afford matter of entertainment to a perfectly inquisitive genius,

You

You have read, that at the temple of Diana at Ephesus, there was a stair-case made of the wood of the vine. I believe you have laughed at the account; I am very sure I have; and I remember to have met with more moderate people, who have supposed it an error in the name, or in our acceptation of the word: I am ashamed of myself for the readiness of doubting what did not suit with my own ideas, barely because it did not. The church I have been examining shews, that all which has been said of the stair-case, and much more, may be true in the literal sense of the words. The great door of this cathedral is made of planks of the vine, and is sufficiently strong. Many of the planks are twelve foot long, as many inches broad, and two or three inches thick; the wood is tolerably solid, and the grain beautiful. The soil about Ravenna is particularly favourable to vines, which is singular enough, for it is rich, and they in most places thrive best in a poor one. We throw in rubbish, and every kind of starving materials, to impoverish the ground in which we are about to plant them; but the fertility of the land about Ravenna carries them to dimensions that astonish one. I have been shewn the stocks of several, to convince me of the possibility of the planks of the door being truly what they are called, and I am perfectly convinced of it.

Though there is not any thing very singular in the church itself, there is a chapel in it which gave me a great deal of pleasure. The altarpiece is painted by Guido, and is equal to almost any thing I have seen from that masterly hand; the story is the gathering of manna in the wilderness.

ness. You have heard the turbantina of this painter, in the St. Michael de Bosco at Bologna, highly celebrated; there is a head in this piece said to be like it: if the other be like this, it deserves all that has been said about it. But I am yet more struck with another figure, less regarded, I am told, by the generality of those who see the picture; it is a woman, with a vessel of manna upon her head: there is an ease and beauty in the attitude that one rarely sees, and the head has all that simplicity and delicacy of air, that distinguishes this master. The cieling is painted by the same hand: the story is our Saviour in the clouds; the cross is in his hand, and there are a number of angels about him: the face of our Saviour has a placid dignity, that is very charming: but the principal figure for that elegance and grace so peculiar to Guido, is the archangel Michael; one sees in this picture somewhat of that divinity and grandeur, which the antients so highly reverenced in the works of their famous statuaries. It is more than mortal, and yet the figure has all the human proportions.

The unfortunate saint Vitalis made a pitiful end: the good man, for he was once no more, whatever be his present elevated station, was drowned in a well. A church is built to him over the inauspicious spot, and the sacrilegious well is kept open behind one of the altars; but the death of the saint, like that of our Winifred, repaid the world for his loss by the advantages which accrued from it. The water cures all diseases since that time, and is the great medicine at Ravenna. There is some management in this which the bigots do not see: the churchmen distribute the water, and they give it only to such people as they please. It purges;

purges ; but whether this be natural to it, or owing to some addition from the holy hands, is not easily known. There are disorders in which a purging water may do service, and it is easy for these good men to have some smatterer in physic at hand, to tell them what these are, and to direct their giving the sacred spring to no others. If it miss, why people must die at one time or other, in spite of all the medicines in the world. If it be given to a wrong person, and against their orders, and kills, why the death is the punishment of the sacrilege. There is a picture in the church, representing the death of the saint : the subject is not a very favourable one ; but Baroccio has executed it in such a manner, as to do both the saint and himself credit. The poets have a way of ennobling little or disgusting events, which are necessary to their story as they relate them : I find the same thing is in the power of painters. I have not seen many of Baroccio's pieces, but what I have are excellent, though none equal to this ; there is a correctness and judgment expressed in the design, that charm the eye accustomed to lament the want of these, even in some good masters, and as accustomed to reverence them in the greatest. The figures are all graceful, and there is an elegance in the whole piece that perfectly hides the poorness of the subject. It is not difficult to see who were Baroccio's favourite masters ; indeed he has less of the original in him than almost any of the principal painters : you trace Raphael in the outlines and attitudes of his figure's, and you see Correggio in the colouring. He had studied too closely to let his own genius take its full natural swing ; but whether such an imitation may not have been better than all the originality he could have distinguished himself

by

by, is not to be said. What pieces I have hitherto met with of his, have been all either legends of this kind or scripture histories : in several of the last of these he has succeeded to admiration. He seems to have been an enthusiast. It is said he enjoyed but a very ill state of health, and employed all the intervals of his illness in these sacred or pious representations. His friends gave out, that he was poisoned at Rome by the painters among whom he associated, out of envy to his rising merit ; but this carries no probability. He stuck very close to his studies while a youth ; and we know that the poring eternally over wet colours, is but a very bad thing for the constitution. In this sense he might perhaps be poisoned at Rome, for he studied many years there with an unremitting application. Had he left no picture beside the death of St. Vitalis, it had given him sufficient reputation to repay all the fatigue, and all its consequences.

The filling up of the haven, and covering of the foundations of the pharos, are not the only marks of that gathering of the earth about Ravenna, which has converted a sea-port into a city in the midst of a fertile plain : the Rotunda, a little church, but more worthy seeing than any thing in the city, brings farther proof of it. This little church stands without the walls, and at a small distance from the old haven, the place where the earth seems to have been thrown up in greatest quantities. It is a monument of filial piety not to be equalled in all Europe, though the work of a people whom our civilized nations have been used to call Barbarians : it is a mausoleum erected to the memory of Theodorick, by his daughter Amalazontha, who afterwards was murdered

murdered by the command of her husband Theodat, in one of the islands in the Bolsaho. The church is of a round figure, and consists of a ground floor, and a story above it. The lower floor was once used for divine service, but at present the earth is raised about the walls of the building almost to the top of the doors, and the floor is covered to some depth with water. The upper story is now used as a chapel. On the top of the dome there was placed a tomb of porphyry, in which were contained the ashes of the monarch. The French cannon, in the siege commanded by Gaston de Foix, damaged this monument so much, that it was removed soon after, and is now to be seen in a wall in another part of the town ; but wedged in in such a manner, that only one side of the sarcophagus is to be seen, and that considerably damaged.

The roof which was to support so immense a weight, as that of all the load of marble about the monument, it was necessary should be a strong one : it is so : it is indeed the greatest curiosity I have ever seen. The diameter of the dome on the inside is thirty foot ; from without it is thirty eight foot ; and it is formed out of one entire stone. This vast mass of entire rock was originally about forty foot in diameter, and fifteen foot in depth. They have scooped and hollowed it away, till it forms the entire dome of the church, and is a shell of about four foot in thickness. Such a monument of art, as well as labour, is scarce any where extant. It is amazing to conceive how they could work it ; still more so, to imagine in what manner they could raise and place it where it now stands.

The

*Supposed to be the tomb of Theodat the
Bolsaho*

The wall in which the tomb, once placed on the top of this dome, is now fixed, belongs to a convent of the Soccolanti, a place where this Theodorick had a superb palace. This was the Gothic Monarch, who was sent by the emperor Zeno as his vicegerent into Italy, and particularly commissioned against Odacer, king of the Heruli. He soon got rid of that enemy, and when he had done so, established his own family on the western throne, where they reigned through a succession of eight princes, till extirpated by Belisarius and Narses.

The convent of the Theatines, is a round building, as the Rotunda, but it is vastly larger. It is built on the model of the famous St. Sophia at Constantinople. Placidia was the real foundress of this church: she and her brother Honorius are represented in it in Imperial robes, at the act of the consecration. On the further side of the garden is a chapel, in which there is also a great deal more of Mosaic work, of about the same time, and in which there are three marble sarcophagi; they contain the ashes of Placidia, her second husband Constantius Cæsar, and her son Valentinian the Third, in whom the western empire perished. Maximus murdered him in revenge for a rape committed on his wife, and usurped the throne. He afterwards married the widow of the unfortunate prince whom he had killed. She it was who invited Geferic king of the Vandals thither, who plundered Rome, and put an end to the western empire.

The tomb of Placidia has suffered some injury from the brutality of the German Lutherans quartered

quartered at Ravenna, in the emperor's service, during the last war in Italy. They thought it an act of piety, to destroy any marks of a celebrated person of the Romish persuasion. The roof has suffered also extremely by them. They used to divert themselves with firing bullets at the Mosaic with which it is ornamented. We see a thousand deplorable monuments of hostile fury on the churches, not only of Italy, but of England. Probably one half of them have been owing, not so much to the savage disposition of the conquerors, as to this wicked wantonness.

There are two or three antiquities which I must mention to you before I leave Ravenna. I have named the church of St. Vitalis: under one of the porches of this edifice, I was led to a bas-relief, which, though the Cicerone did not seem to recommend as an object of any particular importance, gave me very great pleasure; it is in white marble, and a very beautiful block, but it has been injured. The figures are numerous, and finely executed. You will judge of the others, when I tell you that I immediately knew the face of Trajan. The subject is a sacrifice, and the emperor is represented officiating at it, in the habit and character of a high priest. The vessel which contains the holy water is also an antique, and not without its beauty; it is an urn of alabaster. They tell a ridiculous story of its being found by a man, who dug upon the spot at no better an instigation than that of a pigeon's dipping its bill into some water over the place where it lay. They say it was full of gold and jewels, and shew some which they pretend were a part of the treasure: but this is very idle. In the sacristy of the same church there are also two very magni-

ficient columns of marble ; they are each composed of one single piece, and of one of the oriental kind : they must have belonged to some pompous edifice. Theodorick, though a Goth, had genius and spirit : there are many remains of great buildings, which seem all to refer to his times : these pillars, and a number of others in the church of Apollinius (which stands where a palace of Theodorick's once did) are certainly proofs of it. Of the last mentioned, there are four of porphyry, and two of the oriental alabaster, all of prodigious beauty. There are in the cathedral, among the great number of pillars of the Grecian marble, some of alabaster ; and there are two of the Verde antique, in the church of St. John Baptist, which I take to be inestimable. There are also many sarcophagi, and other remains of the times of the lower empire. Among the modern memorials of this kind, I must not omit to mention to you that of Dante, the Chaucer of Italy : it is a Gothic monument on the outside of the church of St. Vitalis : the epitaph is of his own composing. The restorer of epic poetry was a sacrifice to a mean cabal : while he was employed in an honourable office abroad, he was at home sentenced to a perpetual exile. Ravenna was the sanctuary to which he retired. He threw himself into the protection of Gui de Polentano, lord of the place ; and under that authority wrote his Poems on Paradise, Purgatory and Hell. In these, as he was out of the reach of his enemies, he gave them no quarter : those who had conspired the making him change his residence, are damned to all ages in his writings : nor was the indignation of Francis the First, who caused certain lines to be, two centuries after, struck out of all the editions,

tions, any thing more than a confession that they were felt. Dante must have rejoiced in his grave, to see his just resentment carrying its full force at so considerable a distance of time, against the descendants and successors of those, who, when they injured the private man, did not remember, that the insult would be resented by the poet.

Among the antiquities, which I have left to make this digression in favour of the author, there are in the church belonging to the Comoldolese monks, and dedicated to St. Romauld, four antique pillars of the Nero Bianco, a marble esteemed by many superior to the porphyry or granite; they support the altar. There is no end of the pleasure one has in viewing these churches. I thought at one time that the buildings were so much alike in general, and their furniture so much alike in most of the particulars, that when I had seen two or three, the rest would be tedious. I find it much otherwise: I see them still with new delight. Perhaps my accounts of them convey but a very distant and imperfect sketch of what gives me so full a pleasure in the observation. If it be so, tell me frankly; and though I shall never omit visiting these, my letters shall turn upon the other objects that have gratified my curiosity.

A a 2

LET

LETTER LXIII.

I Am at Rimini. We were obliged to pass the Pisatello by the way. We heard the people in some places call it the Rigon and Rugone. It is the Rubicon of the antient writers ; and, like many other things of pompous name among them, makes but a very inconsiderable figure, in comparison with the descriptions of it. We drove the chaise over it. One would imagine, by the epithets given of it by some of the poets, that it was as big as the Rhine ; but we are particularly told, that it was swelled by melting of the snows when Cæsar passed it. This was no contemptible expedient of the poet, who was determined to make every thing great which he recorded of his hero. We are not certain after all, whether this be the real Rubicon or not. There are not wanting some, who contend for what is now called the Luso being the River, so named by the antients. After all, the bustle about Cæsar's passing it seems an odd kind of matter. If we credit Suetonius, in the Speech he has put into his mouth, there must have been a bridge over it : "It is not now too late to go back ; but if we pass this little bridge, the sword must decide every future step." It was indeed a thing of importance, of the utmost importance to the conqueror ; and yet there required some address to bring it about. I admire the artifice of the leader, who, as he knew he had a superstitious people to deal with, threw the resolution into the effect of a prodigy. Suetonius tells it with an air of reality and fact ; but it is easy to those who know the character of Cæsar, to see what it was. As the

debate was held, a person of extraordinary beauty appeared before them, sitting and playing on a pipe. Among the people who flocked about him were some trumpeters; he seized one of their instruments, and throwing away his pipe, sprung away to the river, and sounded a loud and strong blast. Cæsar cried out, "Let us go on; the prodigies of the gods join with the injustice of our enemies, and bid us proceed: the die is thrown; the rest remains with fortune."

Rimini is another of the desolate cities of the Romania: the pope is its master, as he is of all the others which I have named on the same occasion. It is of great antiquity: we hear of it in the Roman times as very celebrated, and the seat of a considerable colony. Augustus added greatly to its buildings; but its original is traced up much higher than his predecessors: there is a tradition, that it was first founded by the followers of Hercules. It is lamentable to observe the fate of places of this fame and early origin. What was once one of the most favoured ports in Italy, is no longer a harbour: the marble, with which it was built, is now to be found in the church of St. Francis; and what was once a trading, opulent and crowded city, has nothing to do with commerce, and is inhabited by a very few very idle people.

It is not to be conceived, what can have driven people from these cities: the whole country does not shew one more pleasantly situated than Rimini. It stands on a level piece of extremely rich ground, just by the coast of the Adriatic, and is surrounded behind with an amphitheatre of nature's forming. The sides of hills covered

with vines and fig-trees are the continued prospect. The country all about is fruitful beyond that of the generality of Italy; but the inhabitants are and must be oppressed, and the expression of one of our tragic poets, *What bough man would live beneath such rulers?* seems the language of every heart in the Romania.

Whatever may be the situation of Rimini, in regard to its modern edifices, it boasts enough of the antient to excite and to reward the most earnest curiosity. We read of a bridge of marble, built at Arminium: Arminium is Rimini: the bridge yet stands, and is a noble monument of the Roman taste and splendor. It was indeed begun by Augustus, but it was Tiberius that saw it finished. There is an inscription still legible along the battlements which ascertains this. The bridge has five arches, and is a noble pile of architecture. This is one of the four great bridges which Augustus designed upon the Via Flaminia, which at Rimini he joined to the Aemilian.

There is also a triumphal arch erected by Augustus, which at this time serves as a gate to the town: it is an edifice at once superb and elegant, in high taste, and in tolerable perfection. Behind the garden of the Capuchins there are the remains of an amphitheatre; it has been a spacious one, but the ruins are confined to a very narrow compass, and put to an ill use; they make part of the garden wall of the reverend of this order. It is a pleasure to look back into these antient times, and read in their remains, much more authentically than it is possible to do in histories, the fate, the fortunes, the alliances, and the private friendships or animosities that were between

between monarchs and their people : prejudice or venality may have influenced what we read ; but what we see in this kind, is beyond fallacy and beyond dispute. Where it coincides with history, it confirms and authenticates it beyond all other evidence ; where it contradicts it, the whole is and ought to be overthrown.

Give me leave to indulge a contemplation ; I would call it an enquiry ; do you, if you please, name it a reverie on this occasion. By what I have seen in Rimini, I am taught that the city was a favourite of Augustus, and that the inhabitants were grateful for that honour. Instead of the hatred and animosity which, however concealed, one may see in the stories of many places and of many kings, we trace here that mutual harmony and affection, which as it is the happiness, is of all things that which tends most to the prosperity of both. The bridge which the emperor built for the city, a work of so great expense, and finished in so noble a manner, speaks the peculiar friendship he bore the people ; and the triumphal arch, the remains of which are yet seen in the gate of the city that leads to Pesaro, declares the gratitude of that people, and speaks their love and reverence for the sovereign who had distinguished them by so singular favours. The bridge is not all that remains as a testimony of the indulgence on the one part, nor is the arch all the memorial we have of the people's respect for him on the other. The peculiar conduct in the finishing the Flaminian road up to this city, is one of many other instances which might be produced on the one part ; and there is no end of those on the other.

A a 4 A fact

A fact is thus established by indisputable remains, and perfect inscriptions; let us see how it agrees with history. Those who wrote the annals of that emperor, and gave an account of the earlier state of this city, did not expect that we should, two thousand years afterwards, be thus comparing them, and judging of them by one another. It is true, that they confirm it. They can indeed add no strength to a testimony, in itself so plain and indisputable, but one is pleased to see them concur with one's own opinion, and the strength which they acquire from the agreement is great, though that which they can give is nothing.

Cato deduces the origin of Rimini from the time of the Theban Hercules. Livy concurs with Cato as to its very early æra; and tells us, that it was made a Roman colony so soon as in the time of Appius Claudius and P. Sempronius, three centuries before Christ. The historians who relate the events of the Carthaginian war, declare that Rimini stood firmly by the senate during the whole course of that perilous adventure, and even had the fortitude and resolution to send supplies to them, after the successes of Hannibal at Trabia and Thrasimene had terrified all the neighbouring country. A people thus early loyal, recommended themselves to an emperor of Augustus's discernment more powerfully than all the court interest in the world could have done it for them. He knew that virtues descend with the other inheritances to the children of the brave and good; he accounted them firm and faithful, and he found them so. Where there is true worth there is also gratitude: the virtues

virtues which Augustus rewarded, bloomed with new glory under his auspices, and the returns immortalised his goodness, as much as their sense of it, who raised such lasting memorials of them.

I do not know with what eye you may read a series of thoughts like these; but I see their connection, and it is with this intention that I study antiquities. I should think it a very poor, nor to say a childish pleasure, to view over and over the fragment of a column, or the remainder of a wall, merely as a thing built at such a time; but when it thus confirms some old opinion, or starts some new one, I think it a study of a much more useful and rational turn.

I must not close my letter without observing to you, that the sea appears to have run away from these towns as well as their inhabitants: the Adriatic seems no more fond of the pope for a master, than do his mortal subjects. You will recollect the situation of Ravenna, between three and four miles from that sea to which once it was a port, and a very fine one: the same is the case at Rimini. Here are the remains of a port, and the fragments of a tower, which was once a pharos or light-house. The water is half a mile from it, and where the waves once rose there are now cabbages and broccoli. The land gained from the sea here, as at Ravenna, is particularly rich, and serves the purposes of the gardener better than almost any in the adjoining country, though all rich and fertile beyond what is common on this side the Alps.

There

There is a pedestal of marble in the middle of the market place, with an inscription, that tells us it was on that Caesar harangued his army after he had passed the Rubicon. It is in shape somewhat like a Corinthian pedestal. But there is not all the certainty of this that they would have us believe. That Caesar was at Rimini about the time in which he is supposed to have spoken this harangue, is certain; and in his commentary we have an account of his making a speech to his army at Ravenna; but at Rimini he only tells us, that he staid to make some new levies, and to call some of his legions out of their winter quarters. It is not unlikely, that an harangue might be made on the occasion; and Celsus says there was one. He adds, that when he was a boy a stone was shewn in the market-place, on which he was said to have stood when he spoke. The fact is not of much consequence; but if it were, I should not allow this as any great evidence.

St. Anthony's gridiron is a thing I ought not to leave my account of Rimini without mentioning to you: they shew in the church of Francesco the cell of St. Antonio; the gridiron was on the floor, and the good man used to lay himself upon it, in order to keep him from going to sleep at his meditations. O glorious devotion! when saints cannot keep thee up without these mechanical methods. Who is it that dares sleep at the levee of his patron; yet many spend as large a portion of their time there! Saints must be kept awake by artifice, when they are paying honour to their God. The religion which confesses in itself this weakness, ought to be careful how it boasts.

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LETTER LXIV.

I have been visiting the smallest of all republics. I distinguished at some distance, and not without difficulty, at the top of a very high mountain, a town, the houses and larger buildings of which seemed to be rather a fairy vision, than any thing in reality. Venice appears, as one advances toward it, as if rising out of the sea; St. Marino seems built among the clouds. It is not a strange thing here to see mountains, whose tops are above the clouds in their ordinary situation; it is the case with that on which Marino stands; and the whole town is on that part of it which is in general so encompassed. I never saw so strange a prospect. That it was a town was indisputable. It was a very clear day in which we approached it, otherwise, I suppose, at this distance we should not have seen it at all; but for this advantage one should scarce have seen it from this place. Another singularity on these elevations is, that they retain the snows: the weather was warm and the country open in the lower parts, but we found it winter at Marino; snow lay all about the town.

They have the advantage of good cellars, the coolest perhaps in the world; and nature seems in some degree to have provided against the cold of the situation, by giving them good wine to put in them. The sides of their mountain are a very happy soil for vineyards, and the wine excellent. Though the good lady has given them wine, she has left them to provide themselves with water: there is not a spring, lake or pond in

in all the place. Is not this a document to them to drink a liquor that is properer for so bleak a situation? But when will men listen to the dictates of nature and reason? They are at infinite pains to save up the rain water and the meltings of the snows, and are furnished in sufficient plenty, though not with any very sweet liquor, of this kind.

You heard me call Marino the littlest republic in the world; you will agree with me that it is so, when I tell you this mountain, and three or four little hills scattered about its foot, are the whole territories. When they are in a humour to boast, as Italians commonly are when they talk of the power and riches of their country, they tell you, that in the dominions of their republic you may count four thousand four hundred souls: but they romance in this; it is impossible they should be so many.

Rome once was no bigger than this; but St. Marino never will be any bigger. See the consequences of being born under favourable or unfavourable stars. Perhaps there are better reasons: to be honest is the way to starve: robbery and murder are the short cuts to eminence. Rome had its origin from a parcel of outlaws, soldiers, thieves and ravishers: they were men desperate enough to attempt any thing, and there was nothing but force and rapine to establish them. They continued the principle on which they set out, and became a people of soldiers. When they had enough for their necessities, they began to hunger and thirst after glory, and never rested while there was any thing in the world that other people called their own. Religion is the greatest enemy

to rising in the world : it was a great while before the Romans were troubled with it at all, and when they were, they never gave it leave to interfere with the nobler calls of ambition. Religion was the foundation of this little republic ; and as the people seem still, like the old Romans, to inherit the spirit of their fathers, they never will increase their territories.

The founder of this republick, now elevated to the rank of a saint, was in his life-time a stone-cutter. He retired to this mountain in the latter part of his time, and betook to the life of an hermit. There was no difficulty in getting some occasion of a miracle from the hand of a religious of this kind. It is a country of superstition ; and every thing concurs, not only in the believing, but in the giving rise to such accounts, and in the propagating them. He was at one time, they tell you, walking on the side of the mountain where a poor Vigneron was rolling down a stone from a broken rock, to make up a breach in an enclosure : the venerable father saw him toiling, and compassionated him. " You will soon be released from all this pain, my son, said he, have comfort." It happened that the fellow had been used to be afflicted with the cholic, whether a fit was at that time leaving him, or what was the particular incident, we are not at this time to know ; *ne seire fas est omnia* ; but hearing the consolation from so venerable a mouth, he placed great confidence in it. The father had the repute of a person of great sanctity : he had only meant, that death should one time release him from a life of such fatigue ; but the fellow, to whom custom had rendered this familiar, and who would not have wished to be eased from it

on such conditions, imagined that he spoke of his disorder. Whether nature or faith performed the cure, we know not, but it was instantaneous. The man ran to his companions lower down the hill ; he told them, the holy man had known his disease, without his speaking a word about it, and had cured him by only crossing his hands over him. The miracle was believed, and reported every where. The fellow, likely enough, had his fits afterwards, but they came too late ; the reputation of the saint was up, and the return of his disorder would be attributed to his sins.

The story made a considerable noise ; people rocked about the hermit who had the power of miracles, and the princess of the country, to shew her zeal for the glory of her religion, gave him the mountain on which he had performed the miracle as his own for ever. The people who attended him from this time, built the town, and as they left it so it stands, a memorial of piety, but never to be made any bigger. It is not easy to express to you the veneration which is paid to him by the people, and they expect as much from strangers : they attribute the duration of their commonwealth to his protection. They hardly allow the Virgin Mary a place above him among the saints. As to all the rest, they prefer St. Marino by many degrees. Their best church is dedicated to him, and his remains are buried in it. They have his statue over the great altar, and pay him divine honours. It is among their laws, that speaking disrespectfully of him is blasphemy : it is punished in the same manner.

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The inhabitants of St. Marino recount, with a peculiar kind of pride, the vicissitudes of the fortunes in the other states of Italy; and while they tell you in what manner, and at what time they changed their several masters, add, with a triumphant air, that St. Marino has stood secure during all these changes and shocks of fortune; the piety of its inhabitants, and the power of its protector and founder have preserved it. Mass had like to have got into a scrape on this occasion; he is the honestest and freest creature in the world, but he will learn reserve. He says, after this, and the affair of the smith's wife, of whom I told you, he will confess, that men get experience by seeing the world. A good man who shewed us the image of the saint, was talking in an enthusiastic strain on this subject of the miraculous preservation of their state, while all those about them were destroyed and overturned: M— turned sharply upon him, and stopped the torrent of his zeal, by asking him if there might not be another reason. "I remember," says he, an old woman in the country-town where I was born, who, at a time when poultry, linen, every thing that was portable, was carried off in the night, by a parcel of vagabonds who infested the country, used to shew her old red petticoat on the next hedge as often as she washed it, and pointing to her neighbours would say, "Look you there, ay, ay, look you there; while all your sheets and shirts and table-cloths are stolen, my red petticoat has been safe these fourteen years! See what it is to be good for nothing; no body has thought it worth while to steal it."

The application was too easy; and the severity was the more felt, as there was some sort of foundation

foundation for it in truth. M——'s was brought within the predicament of speaking disrespectfully of their saint. The rigid father could not bear such an insult on the dignity of the republic, and he easily found the way to explain the very charging its security on its insufficiency, into a taking away the honour of the protestion from the saint, to whom the people had at all times attributed it. I have seen so much of this parade, and heard so much of this nonsense, that I am sick enough of it to be very grave when I hear it. This is by great good fortune construed into devotion ; and it was owing to the singular piety and holiness of his companion, that Mr. M——'s was permitted to buy off the very severe punishment allotted for this superior species of blasphemy.

M——'s was in the wrong to set their security wholly on the score of their being inconsiderable. There is, to say nothing of their protection from this sainted mason, another, and a very strong cause of it : the town, you have heard me say, stands on the top of a very high mountain, it is not only a high, but a very steep and craggy one, and there is but one road, and that a narrow one, by which they are accessible. They look upon this as their real security, though they chuse to attribute it to another cause ; and are so careful to preserve this to themselves, that they have a law, and a very severe one, against any of their citizens coming into the town by any other way, lest it should by degrees make a path over some other part of the mountain. Liberty is very dear to those who enjoy it in a land of slavery ; the people of St. Marino know the sweets of it, and would preserve

serve it at any hazard. It is hard to say what could force them in their situation, with no way to come at them but this single path; and they are soldiers from their infancy. All that are of an age to bear arms are exercised; and ready at a moment's call; and they have distinguished themselves in a particular manner as soldiers, in those wars in which they have been engaged as auxiliaries. They assisted Pius the Second against one of the lords of Rimini; and that pope acknowledged his successes in a great measure owing to their bravery, and rewarded them nobly. They do not at present seem ambitious of enlarging their territory, and they are right; by enlarging they might lose it. It was once somewhat more extensive, reaching half way up a neighbouring hill, but at present it is reduced to its antient limits. These they will always be able to preserve; for who is it that will think it worth while to make an attempt upon a place, rendered by nature almost inaccessible; defended by a set of resolute and even desperate people, fighting their own immediate cause, and not worth having if they should get it?

VOL. I. **b** **LET:**

LETTER LXV.

I did not write to you, my dear —, from Pesaro, but I cannot reconcile myself to the neglecting it. It is the pleasantest town I have seen of a long time. It is situated on the Adriatic, at the mouth of a large and rapid river. It stands upon a slight ascent, and commands every way a prospect that delights the eye in an uncommon manner. The sea is before it, and the Adriatic, you know, is a sea that gives as beautiful an idea of the water prospect as can be met with; behind and on every side of it there are little hills, on whose slope in every part there appear orchards, vineyards, corn-fields and pastures, varied in a most happy and picturesque manner. The soil is fruitful, and is better cultivated than in many parts of Italy. Remember I am out of the pope's territories; this city is in the dutchy of Urbino. The fruit-trees stand close, and yet produce in a surprising manner: the grapes are large, full, and, when ripe, of a fine flavour; the figs and the olives are not only more abundant than any where, but they are the largest and finest that I have seen.

The face of plenty and of pleasure that the country affords, corresponds with what we see in the city. It is not a very large one, but it is well built: it is full of good houses, and so crowded with inhabitants, that you would suppose yourself in London or Bristol. Heaven and Earth, what it is to change a master! To be in the pope's territories is to be in desolation: one no sooner gets into a dutchy or province of another name,

but nature and art revive together. When I think of the grass-grown streets of Padua, and the worn pavements of Pesaro, it is scarce to be conceived that they are but at a little distance from one another in the same kingdom. You must not wonder at the epithet of the worn pavement of these streets ; they are paved with brick, set edgewise, and therefore soon shew the marks of feet ; but the concourse and bustle are such here, that they would be rubbed down if they were made of Shakespear's everlasting flint.

Pesaro has been an antient city; Cæsar honours it with a frequent mention in his Commentaries. It is generally allowed to have been a Roman colony, destroyed by Totila, and to owe its present face, in a great measure, to the design of Belisarius, who, we are told, rebuilt and greatly improved the old Pesaurum. It has a harbour, and they say it once was a good one : at present the case is otherwise ; the mouth of the river is choaked up with sand. There is a bridge over the Foglia, which joins Romania and the marquisate of Ancona. Clement the Eleventh was born here, and he gave them a cathedral, no bad piece of building. I make no doubt of Pesaro's owing its improved state to the having been under its own dukes ; but as it has been this hundred years demised to the pope, I wonder it does not follow the fortune of the rest.

There are two or three good pictures of Guido, Barocci, and Paul Veronese. The calling of St. Andrew to the apostleship is by the latter hand, and is a very fine piece. What I saw else of note here, was a statue of Urban the Eighth, in

the great market-place, and a very elegant fountain under the grand piazza.

— So much for the agreeable Pesaro. I write to you from Fano ; Fanum Fortunæ, as the old people called it. You will not want to be informed, that the favourite goddess of the Romans had a temple here. Asdrubal was vanquished on this spot, and the temple built on that occasion. A pretty compliment to the general. *It was fortune's works, and fortune take the praise.* Is not that the English of it ? I mentioned a fountain at Pesaro ; there is another here, a very elegant one ; this is an ornament in true taste. In these hot countries, the falls of water do more than give an idea of coolness ; they really chill the air, which begins in the middle of the day, I can tell you, to be intolerable. Augustus was, and he deserved to be, a favourite monarch with all this part of Italy : there is a triumphal arch erected to him here : it is, though defaced by time, at this day a glorious building. We see what it was, when in greater perfection, on a neighbouring wall ; there is a plan of it, as entire, and all its inscriptions. No remains appear of the temple of Fortune. There was reason to build it, when they had succeeded by chance in an important action ; but when the city was destroyed by the enemy, the goddess had plainly enough thrown them out of her protection, and they were in the right to throw her out of doors. Who would have thought it worth while to compliment a deity who had deserted them, or to build again a temple to Fortune, which Fortune did not think it worth her while to preserve ? Guido has left some pictures in the new church ; they

they are small, but masterly, though not of his first rate.

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L E T T E R L X V I .

WE are in haste to be at Rome, once the seat of empire, now the repository of the works of the greatest hands; a scene of curiosity equal to what it was of pomp. It was but a very little while since I wrote to you from Fano, and I am now at Ancona. We have passed through Sinigaglia without making any great stay: the town is pleasant; it stands on the coast of the Adriatic, with a river behind it, as Pesaro, but it wants the eminences that are every where so conspicuous and so beautiful about that place. It stands in a plain. All that I saw worth observation there, was a picture by Barocci: it is in a little church adjoining to the piazza; the subject is Christ carried to his sepulchre.

Ancona pleases me much, now I am in it: at a distance, as we approached it, I was still more charmed with it. It stands on a promontory, and shews itself to a vast advantage. It is the capital of the marquisate of its name, and is situated on the shore of the Venetian gulph. It is an old city: they say it owes its origin to the Syracusans, driven out by their tyrant, the immortalised Dionysius. What support there is for such a conjecture, you are more able to say than I am.

Trajan's arch is a noble and beautiful structure; and, to a person of my singular turn, does him more honour than all the fulsome praises that have been delivered of him. The inscription is short, but it ought to remain entire for ever, and it will long do so, for the letters are large, and cut very deep. The occasion is, that he had, at his own expence, made the port safer for trading vessels. In my opinion, there is more true glory in such an action, than in a victory; assuredly, it has a less interested motive, and is the sole act of him who has the praise of it. The arch is a very magnificent and noble one: there is scarce in any other of the remains of the antients such an instance of majesty and simplicity. It is very entire; but there are cracks in several parts, occasioned, probably, by earthquakes. It is built for standing a long time: the foundation is carried deeper than the whole height above ground. The arch is a single one, between pillars of the Corinthian order. Architects are apt to overload this order with superfluities, and this makes the beautiful simplicity of it here the more observable. The arch is composed of fewer stones than it is common to see in those of the Roman times, and the sweep of it has a peculiar lightness and elegance. There seem to have been originally festoons, and some other ornaments about it; but the Goths and Huns have left no more than the holes in the marble, as remembrances that such things once were. It is composed of large blocks of marble; and they fit one another in such a manner, as is astonishing. One is in pain about the key-stone, which has shrunk a good deal from its place; but there does not appear to be any immediate danger of its falling. The port lies just

just under the arch, and from it there is a fine view of all its parts. The town is carried every way round this, and takes in two hills, or part of both, into its circumference. St. Cyriace, which is a kind of cape on one of them, is a most beautiful spot; one has an extensive and a beautiful view of the sea, and of the adjacent country, from it. Clement the Seventh gave Ancona its citadel, which stands on the other hill. This was a very proper present, from one who had surprised and taken it, under a pretence of defending it against the common enemy. There was once a temple dedicated to Venus on one of these hills; so the poets tell us; but we see no remains of the building.

Ancona, though there is something very pleasing in it, is inferior in many respects to several of the cities of less note in Italy. The streets are narrow, and the continual ascents and descents makes it disagreeable to walk in them. The houses in general are but mean, and the cathedral is a dark, disagreeable, low building. The front is a heap of good marble, a quarry above ground: there is no sort of design or elegance in it. The town-hall is indeed a handsome building, and the cieling well painted; and in the churches there are some good pieces of Guercino and Barocci, and some of Titian.

They are more careful of their health here than I have found them any where. The people deputed to the examination of foreigners on this head, demanded our fede or attestation, as they met us at the very entrance of the town, and were so careful of their good selves in particular, that they would not touch it immediately from

our own hands, but had it fixed upon the end of a long reed, and fumed it over burning frankincense before they ventured to read it.

There is a strange league between trade and infidelity in this city. Ancona always valued itself on this particular; but its commerce, for many years, declined, till some Jews were received into the place, in order to revive it: they succeeded, and they continue to enrich it; but how to bear with such people in so holy a place is the difficulty. The number of families of this nation at this time in Ancona, cannot be so small as a thousand. They are permitted to live in peace, on paying an annual tribute to the holy see, and are even indulged with a synagogue for their worship: but here is the compromise, they are forced to attend at one of the catholic churches annually on Good-Friday, where a friar, with great strength of voice as well as of argument, denounces hell and damnation to them in the severest terms, unless they abjure their faith and become christians.

You see the condition in which the outsides of our churches, even of a modern date, are in London, from the foulness of an air loaded with smoak; those of Italy are in the same condition on the inside, with the eternal burning of the lamps; on the outside they are better: but I have no where seen marble in such beauty in any edifice, as in Trajan's arch in this town: the sea air has bleached it to a whiteness superior to that which it had when it came out of the quarry; it is perfectly snowy.

LET.

LETTER LXVII.

WE have passed a very disagreeable way to Loretto. The country is rich and fertile, and the road, in consequence, bad from the very nature of the soil. After the many things I had heard of Loretto, I was surprised to find it a very little place; it consists of only one single street, but it is a large one, within the gate, and another without, and is defended by a wall, and other fortifications. Though a little, it is a pleasant place. It stands on an eminence, and there is something lively and cheerful in it. Loretto is a place of trade, and it is, though a very odd one, a trade that brings in a great deal of money: they make crucifixes and rosaries, and sell measures of the length of the holy image. These last serve for different purposes; for, beside the merit of their having touched the image, and their use of keeping the holy virgin in eternal remembrance, they all of them obtain (so the people are told who purchase them, and so they believe) a medical and miraculous virtue from the tomb of the image. The people who sell them mark upon them the particular measures of the head and waist; and they are told that the former part, applied to the head, infallibly cures the head-ach; and the latter, wound about the waist, procures a safe and easy delivery to women in child-bed. The eagle-stone was never famous for more virtues, nor were its praises more just. Sixtus the Fifth, who made Loretto a city, has a statue of brâs, a very good piece of modern workmanship, erected to him before the cathedral; and in the great square there is a very elegant

gant fountain of marble, enriched with brazen statues.

But all this has little notice ; the great object of curiosity and of veneration here is the Santa Casa, the holy house. This was brought to the place where it now stands, entire, from Nazareth; angels were the carriers of it ; the several stages at which it rested are marked with peculiar honour : a light beyond the splendor of the day ; a light like that which glared around Paul and his soldiers at his conversion, attended on it all the way in the journey ; and the trees of a wood, under whose shade it was once set down, all paid obeysance to it with their heads. So we are informed, with full particularity, in a little book, the work of a pious person, which is put into every body's hands that comes there ; and so believe all the Roman catholics, as well natives as foreigners, if we except only the priests who tell the story, and some few of the people of rank who are in their secrets.

After the long, the painful, and miraculous journey which the holy fabric had taken, here it was set down at last, and here the zeal and piety, and other good considerations of the people of the holy see, have built a church about it, as well for safety as for veneration. I have been telling them here, with some dark circumstances, the story of the Bachelor and his iron house, which we saw together near London. They are convinced, that nothing less than a miracle can have removed an edifice of that heavy metal from place to place, as I assure them it has travelled. Angels might have been spared the servile office on such an occasion, by some means of this kind. So it appears,

pears, at least as I continue to tell the story, and from such stories so told, and so misrepresented and misunderstood as this of mine will be by the people who have heard it from me, in all probability, will arise miracles.

Within the church there is yet another covering for the holy edifice; this is of white marble. It was intended, they say, that this should have been joined to the outer surface of the walls of the building; but the materials recoiled of themselves; and though the foundation was often laid in contact, the stones always placed themselves at a foot distance, out of reverence to the holy materials. This is a standing miracle; no-body doubts the fact.

The priests had reason for intending to bring the outer case close to the walls, but why they did not execute the design is not indeed so easy to say at present; a reverend distance, which people are obliged to keep when they approach it, answers all the purposes. They have the confidence to tell people who visit it to this day, that it is built of a peculiar kind of stone, common in Nazareth, but not found any where in Italy. This serves to countenance the miraculous bringing of it from thence; but I had the impertinent curiosity to pry into the walls, and find them principally brick: they are flat bricks of irregular size, with some pieces of a whitish stone here and there between them. The miraculous receding of the stones which compose the outer wall, has left a space of a foot for the discovering of this; but they do not often suffer strangers to be inquisitive,

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The holy edifice is of an oblong figure, its length about equal to twice its breadth. It stands due east and west, and the dimensions within may be about thirty foot in the length, and not quite so much as half that in breadth, the side walls being somewhat thicker than those of the ends. About a fourth of the length, at the farther end, is separated from the rest by a grate-work of silver: this they call the sanctuary, and in this stands the holy image. The other part, which is the body of the house, has an altar at the east end, and at the lower or west end a window, which they shew with vast veneration, and assure you is the place at which the angel entered in at the annunciation.

The walls in this part are in most places left bare, that the true materials may be seen; but they are in some parts covered with irregular patches of plaster, on which there are some pictures of madonas; these are very ill done, with design that they may countenance the story of their having been painted in Nazareth. It is otherwise with the inner part or sanctuary; the walls are there, as it were, wainscotted with silver: they are covered with plates of that metal, hung up with vows for certain mercies and deliverances.

The holy fraud and folly carried on at this place are beyond conception; there is only one thing greater, the treasure: it is inconceivable what immense loads of this have, by the artifices of the priesthood, been drawn into this spot any time this four hundred years.

It is odd, that with all their expence they could not have procured a little decency; the face of

the holy image is so far from beautiful or charming, that it is disgusting in the highest degree; there is something in the face that is more than distasteful; it is shocking to the eye; it is a dead, disagreeable, yellow complexion, and one cannot help being out of humour to see such a profusion of all kinds of gems glittering about so nasty a figure. But to give you, my dear —, some idea of this pompous room: the image stands in a niche of silver immediately over the chimney; the real chimney which the Virgin Mary in her life-time used. It is about four foot high, and there is a Christ in her arms; but that little image is in a manner buried under the globe in her left hand; the right is held out as in an act of blessing. The image is of wood; they tell us of cedar of Lebanon, and they assure us it was carved by the hand of St. Luke; this evangelist, according to their several accounts in several places, having been a physician, a painter, and a sculptor. Her complexion, as already observed, is that of a mulatto, or, if it be possible, more disagreeable: her dress is rich beyond imagination, and this is varied occasionally; she has several suits, which are worn on her particular festivals, one of the most august of which is that which is put upon her on the commemoration of the removal of the holy house from Nazareth to this place.

The blaze of light in every part of the house, serves to set off the riches in a very particular manner; the lamps which serve for this purpose are almost innumerable; there are sixty-two of gold and silver all of vast price, and some of them of the most exquisite workmanship: all about the holy image there are also angels of

massy

massy gold waiting on her ; in the hand of one of these is a heart of gold covered with diamonds, and enriched with a flame of rubies. This attracts every body's notice ; they say it was a present from the Queen of our James the Second.

In the repository, which is within the sanctuary, there is preserved a treasure of another kind ; this consists of a parcel of coarse, dirty-looking earthen-ware, the same, they tell us, that the holy family eat out of. You may be sure these do not want the power of miracles ; a touch of them will cure common diseases ; but a little water drank out of them, the most dangerous. One would wonder in these places, where there are so many saints, and so many miraculous powers ; so many reliques, and so many impregnated wells, and dishes, and sickles and carcases, the least of them able to cure the most dangerous diseases ; I say, one would wonder that the physicians could live, or that any body else ever died ; but, by what I see, the doctors are as plump here as in England, and they send their legions to the grave with as bold a hand, and with as little remorse. Nay, what is more strange yet, the very churchmen die, those who preach up the faith in them, who would stake their salvation upon the truth and validity of the miracles, and who have the precious medicines within their power, grow sick and die like other men ; but perhaps they are weary of a bad world, and will not be stopped in their course to a better.

The case or covering of the house is a very elegant structure ; it is of Carrara marble, and every block selected : it is in the Corinthian order, and has an elegant ballustrade at the top. The pillars

pillars stand two and two, and in the narrower intervals there are niches placed one above another : in the upper series there are ten sybils ; in those below them stand as many prophets. The broader intervals, or those between the several pairs of the pillars, are ornamented with elegant bas-reliefs ; the subject is the history of the blessed Virgin : these are by the best hands of the time ; Sanfovin has executed some of them in a very high taste ; the whole are equal to any modern sculpture in Italy.

On each side of the holy house there are two doors ; over one of them is written an inscription in Latin, declaring all persons excommunicate who shall presume to enter with arms about them. There are always persons ready to take care of the swords of those who go in ; but the domestics of our lady are not so polite as those of the pope ; they took hold of mine with some roughness, and pointed up to the sentence. A gentleman, who was present at the time, and had just been at Rome, told us of the great delicacy with which the same ceremony is performed there. It is not permitted to any one to go into the presence of his holiness, any more than into that of the virgin, armed ; but the gentleman, whose business it is to execute that office (he told us) admired his sword-belt as the most beautiful he had seen, and begged he might have permission to look at it while he was in the presence ; he paid the same kind of compliment to the head of his cane, professed the English were the best mechanics in the world, and intreated the indulgence of viewing them together during the time of his stay with his holiness.
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The pilgrims that are eternally resorting to this holy fabric, are without number ; one laughs at the concourse ; but when one sees them crawling after one another on their knees round the fabric, and kissing the ground, and counting over their beads with all the solemnity of real worship, it creates another passion ; one is out of countenance that rational creatures can descend so low, and mirth gives way to pity.

When I had seen the images and utensils of solid gold, the extravagant dress of the image, and the profusion of solid plate upon the walls, and of gems of all kinds about the several parts, and ornaments, all my ideas of the grandeur of this little room were fully satisfied : but I had there seen nothing, in comparison of what are the real riches : the treasury is just by ; I was led into that ; good God ! did ever mortal eye behold such profusion of every thing that is of price : it is in vain to think of describing such a treasure to you ; the very vestments of the image are beyond all valuation ; the jewels seem to have been the select and picked stones from all the mines of the east, and are so numerous, that one would imagine all the courts in the world had been stripped to furnish out the single blaze : there is nothing costly that is not to be seen here in quantities ; which would make one imagine, that the priests had an art of making what it was impossible should have been purchased. Whatever is wanting in dignity and elegance in the house where the image stands, is amply supplied by the edifice in which these extraordinary treasures are reposèd. It is a large and noble edifice, it fills the eye with its extent, and charms it with

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its elegance. There is an altar-piece at the upper end, a Crucifixion, a picture by Pomerancio, of vast value. The cieling is painted also in compartments by the same hand, and the pieces all highly finished, and the divisions of the compartments are very elegant; they are of stucco, highly finished and gilt. They have here the greatest picture that I ever yet saw; it is by Raphael; a Madona, with a Christ upon her lap. It is not without cause that this painter has been called the Divine Raphael. It is not easy to say what in particular it is that affects one so strangely in this picture; but, upon the whole, the awe and veneration which it inspires are equal to the admiration; nay, they are greater; we lose the idea of the painter in the power of the object: it is not a picture; it inspires with all the sentiments of a reality. There is something more than mortal in the face of the virgin; and even the infant, though in the innocent posture of throwing up the legs and arms, though all the thoughtless air imaginable is in the face, yet has divinity in every part; the look is sweeter than that of a human face, and yet with the grace there is something awful. It is not necessary to be told, that the picture is of a young divinity; the child alone, cut out of the canvas, would be known for the Saviour of the world, without any ornament or any circumstance to lead to it, beside the mere expression of the countenance. There is something more than human in the expression of this master's pencil. They say the most exalted excellencies in the several sciences are not acquired, but are delivered down from Heaven: this picture would give you faith, in what you have been used to smile at as an hyperbole. I remember Longinus says of the eloquence of Demosthenes,

that it was the result of talents which he received immediately from the Gods ; of gifts, which it was not allowed him to call mortal : I have thought it true, in reading that glorious Greek, and I am as much convinced of the same superior assistance, when I look upon this picture. I do not well know how to distinguish between words that have no determined meaning : this perhaps is the effect of genius, and what I call inspiration is no more than that ; a quality pretended to by multitudes, but possessed only by two or three people in a thousand years ; you will own it to Phidias, to Zeuxes, and to Raphael ; to Homer, to Milton, and to Shakespear ; but after this, what will you say of the * * * * and the Blackmores that pretend to possess it ? You will call the thing by a different name, in the breasts of people whom it has affected in so different a manner, and there is nothing more than I would ask of you under this distinction. If other people were poets, Homer is something more ; if * * * * is a painter, Raphael was something else. There is as much difference between the productions of the one and the other class of these, as between the marble image of the statuary, and the living form warm from the hands of the Creator.

This picture of Raphael is chargeable with none of the imperfections that glare in the works of other very good masters : his taste is pure and perfect, and his design at once noble to the most exalted pitch, and accurate to the severest nicety. I cannot look upon this inimitable piece, and suppose that any of those immortalised names which we hear with such reverence from the authors of antiquity, were superior to this great man ; assuredly, no man among the models, though we

allow him all the excellencies that have been given, can be compared with him. The disposition in this piece has a dignity, a grace and ease in it that none else has come up to; the eye is filled as well as charmed with it; and there is something of a modest nobleness in the drapery of the virgin, and I know not what ease and softness in the attitude of the head, which astonish one.

One would be amazed to think what motive should induce men to sacrifice their fortunes, and princes to impoverish their revenues, as must have been the case, to enrich the shrine of this saint, in a manner exceeding all that can be produced from the records of antient profusion. You, who are not of the Romish church, will hardly be brought to believe that real devotion has been the source of a great many of these immense donations. You are to consider, that princes may be weak as well as other men: for my part, I have not found it any where that riches and wisdom are declared associates. Where there is ignorance, superstition finds an easy admittance, and the Romish religion is, of all that ever have been professed, that which is calculated to carry enthusiasm to the most exorbitant heights. The churchmen have all the opportunities they can desire of the confidence of the affluent, and a respect that you would scarce conceive is paid by the more ignorant of these to their character. You know this church also declares a power of absolution: the good father has nothing to do but to thunder out hell and damnation to some trembling creature who has wealth, and when he has set the terrors in their strongest light, to sell the pardon and security from them, nay the pro-

mise of a certain happiness in their stead, at any price he pleases : a donation to the church is the usual resource, and priests have consciences that will propose very ample things.

Beside the bequeathings of dying zealots, and the donations of yet living bigots, who think they make a cheap purchase of Heaven at the price of one of these presents, there are another set of men, who have a different, but as powerful a principle ; these are men who believe no more of the matter than the priests do, and who do not intend to buy the good offices of the saint in Heaven, but of the church upon Earth, by these largesses. These keep up the farce of devotion as warmly and as highly as the priests themselves ; they take care to shew them that they are in the secret, and joining by some magnificent present of this kind to inspire the people with a reverence for what they pretend to adore, the church adopts them as people initiated into its mysteries, and knows it is her interest to keep their secrets, and join in their designs. It were hard to say, which of these two kinds are the more generous : the instances of liberality from both are amazing.

They shewed us a jewel of vast price, the gift of the lady of the field-marshall Zumjungen : it was given to the Madona by this good catholic to obtain the conversion of her husband : the price was paid, but the purchase never delivered ; there stands the jewel, but the husband died in his infidelity. There is no doubting such a woman's being in earnest ; but it is easy to see grimace in many of them. Who ever bore a greater aversion to enthusiasm and the priesthood than the great prince of Condé ? in his heart, we very well know

know what he must have thought of the house of Loretto ; yet they shew you there a model of the castle of Vincennes in silver, a present from that prince on his being delivered from the prison there : he had his reasons, though he was not in earnest. What was said, perhaps, without perfect justice, by one of our princes, in regard to politics, is certainly true in these countries in the matter of religion : " Men of great sense are therefore rogues, and men of little sense are therefore honest."

LETTER LXVIII.

GRÉGOR Y the Twelfth, who was deposed from the pontificate in the council of Constance, lies buried at the little town of Recanati. We saw his tomb ; it is in the great church, and makes some figure. There is not much in the town : there are some paintings, and a great deal of gilding in the church, and on the town-house there is a very superb monument of brass, dedicated to the lady of Loretto ; the device is the Sante Casa, or holy house : it is of a considerable size : on it there is a Madona, with a Christ in her arms, and, by way of supporters to it, there are four angels. This august remembrance of the Virgin, is in commemoration, as they tell you, of the holy house having first rested in the territories of this city, when it was transported from Dalmatia. Recanati stands prettily, but the way to it is bad : it lies through a rich country, between hills continued almost the whole

way. We have seen little worth observation in Macerata and Tolentino; I have passed through them, rather than seen them, and am at this time at Foligno. There is something romantic in the Appennines, but the travelling upon them is tedious and painful beyond description; I have never been so sick of any thing, and I have been taught by this how very differently the same things appear to us when we are in, and when we are out of spirits. On my first ascent of these mountains, every thing pleased me; the very rough rocks and horrible precipices had a pleasing terror in them, and the prospects from several parts of them, which are doubtless the finest and most extensive in the world, charmed me. It was with infinite satisfaction that I cast my eye from the steepy ascent on the right, to the flowery valley deep on the left, and I thought the tranquil scene below acquired new charms from the precipices above; but this was but the pleasure of an hour or two: after the charm of novelty was gone, I looked with envy at the valleys, while we were climbing horrible ascents, and instead of enjoying the precipice, was afraid of tumbling down. There is something strangely frightful, indeed, in the spiral road upon one part of these mountains; we passed along a causeway, not ten foot in breadth, with nothing but a steep wall of flint on the one side, and on the other as steep a precipice, the depth a mile or more in perpendicular. I wished for the safe terras at Windsor, and was ready to curse the popes, that had not raised a parapet along the verge of this hideous way: there is no defence. A slip of the foot of a mule carries you to the valley below, a fall that must crush beast and man to nothing.

I was

I was charmed when we arrived here. I have been congratulating myself on the escape from what those, who are accustomed to it, indeed will not allow to be a danger, but what, to any other eye, is the highest scene of possible horror. I do not know whether Foligno acquires new charms from the contrast, but it appears to me the most pleasant city that I have ever seen : many of the Italian towns stand delightfully, but this more than them all. The country about it has not the appearance of fields : it is a valley of a vast extent, perfectly even, well watered, and so disposed, that the city seems to stand in the midst of a vast garden. The plantations are as regular as in the most beautiful enclosure ; and the mountains, that every way surround it, have the appearance of a vast wall. What can be conceived so beautiful ! what so pleasant ! there is all the advantage of a garden, all the variety and charms of the prospect ; but there is this vast advantage, that it has an extent which gives it a grandeur never to be equalled in a private plantation.

You will not wonder that so sweet and eligible a situation has been the place of a town for many ages. The present Foligno stands on the ruins of the forum Flamini of the antient Romans : who first built houses there, is not to be traced ; no history mentions the time when they were not there.

I have visited a convent of nuns here ; the name is La Contessa. I was in raptures, I am afraid you will say in very extravagant raptures, with a picture of Raphael's, in the treasury of Loretto;

all that I said was too little. There is another Madona at this convent, I think, superior to the first ; at least, there is something more noble in the circumstances of the picture. She is here represented in the clouds, and the attitude is elegant and great beyond expression ; below the principal person, on one side, there are the figures of John the Baptist and St. Francis ; and on the other, two others ; the one, some of the Romish saints ; the other, that of the person at whose expence the picture was done : between them, but still lower, is a little angel, with a vase in its hand.

They blame painters for not knowing when to take off the pencil ; nothing is so common as to say, that the spirit of such or such a picture has been lost in the retouching ; but it is only when men finish, after they have, properly speaking, done, that this happens. Raphael has finished this piece to the greatest height ; yet there never was a picture of more spirit ; every part of it is equally finished, and yet every part has all its original fire. It has the neatness and perfect accuracy of Domenichino, with all the freedom and noble dignity of its author. The colouring is equal to the design. In the whole, it is not possible to make me believe that there can be a finer picture. It is the altar-piece of the convent. I was surprised to find the people of the house so little sensible of its inestimable value.

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LETTER LXIX.

I Am at Spoleto. One would think Livy had never seen the place, when he insults the memory of Hannibal for having retreated from before it. The place is impregnable by nature : it stands, in great part, upon a rock that is more than impregnable : it is inaccessible. In the way hither they pointed out a little antique temple to us ; it is now used as a Romish chapel, and we found it worth examination. The general opinion is, that it was dedicated to the goddess Fortune ; but there is no remain of any kind to justify the conjecture. A river eternalized by the Roman poets and historians, runs very near it : the Umbrians paid a kind of religious reverence to this stream, and it is most probable, that they erected this little temple to the genius of the fountain. They supposed a kind of miraculous power in its waters : you hear them talk of cattle becoming white by drinking it ; but we do not find any more white oxen here than elsewhere at present, so probably the water has lost this quality. I met with an Irish physician viewing the temple ; he readily joined with me in its being dedicated to the river god ; and from the abundance of his learning, stood up for the truth of the old tradition, concerning its turning cattle white. He supposed this to be owing to its having run over some beds of sulphureous matter ; for he assured me, that the burning of this substance under straw-hats whitened them, and that a red rose would be changed to the same colour by the fume. He proved from this, that it was easy for a river to have this property

perty of whitening the cattle ; and as to its not effecting it at present, he easily found a salvo for that, in supposing that the bed of brimstone was at this time washed away.

The building, though small, is full of elegance ; all the grace of the Corinthian order are displayed in it with vast beauty and propriety : I have not been of a long time more charmed with any piece of architecture.

They shew us at Spoleto the gate from before which the Carthaginian general was repulsed, and preserve the memory of the event by an inscription. They call the gate to this time Porta di Fuga. The miracle would have been if he had entered it.

Spoleto abounds with remains of Roman grandeur. It was erected into a Roman colony so early as very soon after the overthrow of the ancient Umbri. There are few remains of the kind equal in magnificence to the aqueduct here ; it consists indeed only of one row of arches, but there is all the Roman simplicity and grandeur in these. You will be amazed to hear me talk thus, when you remember that there are not wanting travel-writers, who mention it as Gothic : you will believe me, when I assure you, these bear-leaders (for so we call here the people who have taken the opportunity of attending fools upon the tour, to give their opinion of what they saw in it) can have seen very little, or indeed can have read very little, of the difference between the Roman and the Gothic taste, when they confounded them in this noble ruin.

Theodorick,

Theodorick, we learn from history, had a castle which was his principal residence, at times, for many years on one of the rocks near this aqueduct. There stands an old building of that kind at present on the rock that joins this antient edifice; but we are not to suppose this Theodorick's: it was built by Narses, out of the ruins of an amphitheatre. Theodorick's was demolished in the Gothic war; and indeed there requires little judgment in architecture to distinguish the present castle as of very different origin.

A picture in the cathedral surprised me greatly; it is an altar-piece, a glorious design, but unfinished; the painter was Philippo Lippi, a man of incomparable genius, but infamous life. He had been banished his own country (he was a Florentine) for debauching one of the nuns at the monastery of Prato, while he was painting the chapel; and he died here, while he was at work on this piece, by poison, a victim to the resentment of a person of the place, with whose wife he had an intrigue while about it. The cathedral is a fine old building: the front is adorned with Mosaic on a gold ground, and the pavement is inlaid with several kinds of marble in small pieces. The chapel of the Madona of St. Luke has some fine marble statues. The chapel of the Crucifix, which stands a little out of the town, was originally a temple dedicated to Concord. The remains of the amphitheatre, with part of the stones of which the present castle on the rock was built, are yet to be seen; and there is a triumphal arch also, a very magnificent one. The grandeur of this, and of all the other remains, is however absorbed and lost, as it were,

in that of the aqueduct: it is the highest in Europe, and of a great length; it joins the mountain of St. Francis to that of Spoletto.

LETTER LXX.

I Write to you from Terni; but write from what place I will here, I find I shall not want opportunities of feeding your curiosity. Every thing now smells of the old Roman: we saw in every part fragments of marble colonades, broken busts, inscriptions, and every kind of remembrance of its having once been a town of note. The way hither afforded me also great room for observation: it is through a narrow pass between the Appenines, and the mountains on each side afford a variety of romantic scenes: in one place, nothing can be conceived more fruitful than the sides; the laughing verdure exceeds that of an English meadow, and the flowers of different kinds have a strange appearance to one not used to the country; but they are many of them very pretty. In other places nothing of this is seen, but bare craggy rocks, and all the horror of falling precipices. I had difficulty to get my companion along, he found so many beautiful and surprising products of the mineral, as well as of the animal and vegetable world: his arm was filled with plants, that would have made a glorious figure in the best of our gardens. On the top and sides of a pasteboard box, which he carried with him, he had stuck with pins a number of insects, of different form from one another,

another, and all perfectly unlike to every thing of the same kind with us. But what he was able to carry, was little to what he pointed out to me as beauties of a superior kind, and as demanding a yet greater regard on account of their curiosity than even of their elegance, and which it was impossible for him to take away.

I spent some time, and could have passed much more, in admiring these; they were the beauties of the mineral kingdom. The rocks, which were naked in many places wherever they had been washed clean by the rains or falls of water from some neighbouring eminence, shewed a variety of figures, in different materials, buried in them. My enraptured instructor guided my eye, one by one, to these; in this place he pointed it to a leaf of fern perfect stone, and buried in an immense mass of stone, only discovered by some accidental breaking of that mass, yet shewing every fibre, and every indenting of the recent vegetable: some pieces of this were in seed, and the round dots in which that seed is laid in the growing plant, were conspicuous under the form of so many risings of a white matter on the stone. In another part, he shewed me blocks of wood turned to perfect stone, and buried in the stone as the former; and as we advanced farther, I saw the teeth of sharks, and the vast grinder of a land animal, an elephant, immersed in the same manner in the solid rock; but this was little to what we saw as we advanced toward the highest part of one of the mountains, whither the eager curiosity of M—'s led not only himself, but me, though out of the road. Here we saw a profusion of sea-shells, of an almost infinite variety of kinds, stuck in one or other part of the rock,

rock; and in some places in such abundance, that they absolutely constituted the greatest part of it; I never saw such multitudes, never any thing like such variety, even on the shores: they were all perfect stone; but they retained their lineaments so perfectly, that one would have fancied them to be soft. The several kinds of screw-shells made a surprising and beautiful figure: the cockles, from the size of a pea to that of a man's doubled fist, were frequent, and full of different streaks and cross lines. The nautilus stood forth in other places like a vast globe, and in some the scallops would have tempted any one to think them real. The shells lose their beautiful colouring in these places, but they preserve every other character of their pristine state entire. M—s made an observation on this occasion, that surprised and pleased me.

" You have read, says he, that all kinds of coral, which are products of the sea, are found in this manner buried in stone at land, except the red coral; the red is as frequent, and more durable, than any; why should it not have lived among the rest in this altered state? doubtless it does. Did any of those who lament their not finding red coral, ever meet with a red scallop? certainly no. There are many species of the branched white corals, from which the red is not to be distinguished otherwise than by colour; and there is no doubt but this vegetable loses its colour as well as these shells, and consequently is often met with, but always taken for one or other of these."

Beside the infinite variety of shells, which I had been used to see about the shores, or in the cabinets

cabinets of the collectors, and which I knew again in their stony state in these rocks, I was surprised with the sight of many, very perfect in their form, and yet wholly unlike all that I had thus met with. M—s told me I was not to accuse the imperfection of the cabinets I had seen on this occasion, but to wonder at the abundance of nature in these several appearances. " All these, said he, are the remains or exuviae of species of shell fish, created to enjoy their being out of the reach of human observation ; they are inhabitants of the deep bottoms of the ocean, not of the shores, as those with which we are acquainted, in their recent state ; they have no opportunities of being thrown under our observation, but live and propagate, and die and decay, at these immense depths, which no storms disturb ; and even if they were within the reach of those, the shelves and precipices which stand in the way to the shore, render it impossible that they should ever be thrown up. One accident only could have disclosed them, continued he, to our eyes, and it is to that we owe them here."

From this exordium, he went on to shew me among those, the former specimens of which had passed upon me for cockles and scallops, multitudes which, when examined, shewed themselves of different and of strange forms, and which he called conchæ anomiaæ. He pointed out a number of gryphites ; shells, though apparently of the oyster clas, yet wholly unlike all that we see of it. He then shewed me the strait and the twisted shells of the concamerated kind ; the one resembling horns, the other thrown toward the smaller end into spirals, and all, wherever they were discovered broken, formed into cells and divisions within.

within. And finally, he shewed me multitudes of what he called cornua ammonis, the variety almost as endless as the number ; these were all divided into cells within, as well as the former, but their external appearance and dimensions afforded an endless variety : they were of all sizes, from the breadth of a sixpence, to that of a small table ; we measured one, that was two foot nine inches in diameter : some were ribbed, some smooth ; some even on the back, some channell-ed, and others ridged, and on some we traced foliated delineations of the most surprising and elegant kinds.

All these we took the more time to examine where they lay, as, to the insupportable grief of my friend, we had no tools to pick them out of the rocks : some few that were loose he got out, and brought away ; enough to preserve a remem-brance of the whole. Had he had means and opportunities, I believe he would have sent over half the mountain to his friends in England.

As we descended, I began to enquire into the explanation of a word he had dropped, about the one occasion on which alone these treasures of the animal world could have been brought to these places, and lodged in the quarries : when we were arrived at our place of rest, he took an opportunity to explain himself at large ; and as on another occasion he had called in the Mosaic account of the deluge, to explain the formation of the strata of the earth in general, he now had recourse to it to shew how these remains of ani-mals and plants had come into the places where we now see them ; and he carried on the argu-ment so successfully, that he at once proved the placing

placing of these things by that catastrophe, and proved that there had been such a catastrophe by the placing of the things.

He began with observing, " that the earth had, according to the only account which is left to us of these its early periods and events, been formed and inhabited so many years before the time of the deluge, that all the species of creatures were sufficiently numerous; that the waters which drowned the earth at that time, were called forth from within its centre, and were the same, with those from a first sediment, of which the present crust or surface of the globe, had been formed. We see then, said he, the whole earth covered to a great depth with a fluid full of the suspended particles of stones, and other mineral matter; we see this fluid making one common mass of water with that of the sea; and we see this general and universal mass of water agitated by winds, with no shores to confine it. Those who have been in storms on the ocean, can form but a very imperfect idea by the comparison of what was the condition of this vast water under equal, perhaps under much more violent storms: the bottoms of the deepest seas were agitated by it, and their contents rolled backward and forward by the motion; while rocks, and whole strata of other hard materials, were by this motion thrown into these depths, their own lighter productions, the shells of fishes, and other decayed, or in part decayed, remains of its inhabitants, were washed out, and rolled along what was before, and what was also hereafter to be, dry land.

" We thus, continued my philosopher, see the shells, not only of the coasts, but those also

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which are naturally inhabitants of the deep seas, brought on land : this serves to explain what are these cornua ammonis, and these conchæ anomiae of so many kinds ; and we ought rather to wonder that we see no more of them, than that we see so many.

" We find them thus brought up by, and rolled about from place to place in a thick fluid, full of the particles of a grosser kind of substances ; we see them in the state of things that necessarily must be blended with the masses formed by those particles ; after a time, the waters in part return to their proper place, and are left in part to evaporate into the atmosphere ; but during all this time, they are depositing a sediment, formed of those stony and earthy particles, with which they are sated. This sediment is at first a soft mud, but it by degrees hardens into stone ; a part of it settles upon places where there are already multitudes of these shells, washed from the bottoms of the remote seas, as well as from the shores : all these are therefore received into the body of the bed of matter thus formed. Beside this, as the water is still in motion, more of these shells are also occasionally rolled from place to place, and some of these quantities are carried over the new formed bed of matter. This, though formed of particles of stone, and hereafter to become stone, is yet at this period soft. Of the number that are washed upon it, many, if not the whole, sink into it, and are there retained for ever, the stone coalescing and hardening about them. Thus we see the present surface of the earth formed of matter once soft, and at that time, when it was soft, liable to receive into its masses, in whatever place, shells, or whatsoever other things were

rolled over it by the common flood. It is therefore evident, that these shells and other matters must have been received into the beds of stone, and there must have been a miracle to keep them out of them.

" The mountains, we are expressly told in the only account we have of this catastrophe, were covered over their tops with the water. Supposing them either formed by the elevation of the strata since, or existent at that time; supposing some of those which we see at present to have been of one of these origins, and some of the other; still both the one and the other must of necessity contain shells in their solid strata on the surface; and we do not find that there are any deeper; or if formed by the succeeding elevation of the strata, those strata must have been liable to the common chance of receiving shells into them while on the flat, and these must be carried up in their several beds; or if existent from the Antediluvian times, they must have been covered by the water of that flood, and they must, like other parts of the globe, have been covered by the sediments of that water, and received a new crust from it. It is not easy to say to what heights so light bodies as shells might not be carried, by the motions of so immense a bed of water in storms; and wherever they were dropped, they must in the same manner have been received into the yet soft beds of stone. The highest mountains might be thus covered with them, if they were, as we are assured they were, covered to a considerable depth by the waters; and indeed the examination of the several mountains we have lately passed, has led me to imagine that some of them were owing to the one, some to the other of these events. I can see

some of them, as I now think, plainly formed by a mere elevation of the strata, which were once on a level; the sides of these are rough and broken, and they appear naked and in their original form. On the contrary, I can distinguish in many others, that they are crusted over with a matter foreign in its nature, and in all its qualities, to that of which they are composed within: these have doubtless been standing in their present form from all antiquity; they were prior to the deluge, and were immersed, as all other parts of the globe, under its waters. The sides and surfaces of these are more even and regular than those of the others, and there are none of those abrupt pieces of strata standing out, which distinguish the others. In some places, where an earthquake had rent these, or some other accident of that powerful kind had disunited the matter of the strata, I could see, that the stony covering which offered itself immediately to view, was no more than a crust, though of considerable thickness, and of the firmest materials. Stone and earth of a very different kind and aspect was to be seen within. Something like this is distinguished also in the level countries, and even in England. I remember to have heard Lord Edgcombe speak of it in Cornwall. As I remember, he used to say, that the miners, in sinking after the tin ore, distinguished the earth and other strata toward the surface, though sometimes also to a considerable depth from those which composed a firmer and more regular assortment of strata below, which they called by the name of *the fast*. This fast, as they express it, whom experience has rendered very sensible of the difference, is the same with the

the inside of these coated mountains. This, in either case, was the firm soil before the flood; and the less regular beds that lie above the *fast* in one place, and those which cover the whole face of the mountain in the other, are doubtless the additions made by the sediments of the waters of the deluge.

There is more in this than appears. I have heard naturalists, and very good ones, wonder how the parts of sea fish came to be buried in strata formed at the time of the creation of the earth. The two great periods from which we are to examine the present state of the earth, are the creation and the deluge; one or other of these will account for all the present appearances of things, but the latter for most of them, as its remains are what we almost every where see, not the face of the creation which has been buried under these. Those who would account for the immersion of shells in the original strata, argue for the original chaotic water having lain many ages on the surface of the earth; they say there was time, during this period, for the multiplication of the several kinds of shell-fish, all of which were created at the beginning; so that these numbers may have been buried, from the redundancy of that supply in the strata, so long after formed. But this system, beside some contradictions to the plain and absolute words of that account which is the only one we have of this remarkable event, has not enough to account for the vast multitudes we see in several places.

M——'s tells me it is a new system I have to advance on this subject, but he does not wholly disapprove it. I am convinced from the testimony

mony of my eyes of the truth of it. It is arguing about a thing which does not exist, when we are explaining the time and manner in which the fossil shells were lodged in the strata of the original earth, for there are none there: all that we occasionally see of the surface and structure of the earth, is that surface which has been formed by the sediment from the water of the deluge; and it is in this surface alone that fossil shells, the teeth of fishes, and other remains of vegetable and animal substances, are found. In all that surface which covers the smoother mountains, whether it were of rock or earth, we have seen these fossil shells; but in that inner part of them, where their original strata are disclosed by some accident, we never saw any. I do confess, that in those mountains which have rugged sides, and which seem formed of strata raised from the level surface, we found every where shells; but I do not know that the deepest of these strata, or those nearest to the foot of the mountains, were raised from a depth beyond what the crust left by the deluge in that part had extended: there were shells in these, as well as in the rocks which formed the crusts of the others; and so, according to my system, there ought to be. That they are thus rough, is a proof of their being of later time than the deluge, since, if they had been Antediluvian, they must have been covered like the others; and as they must therefore have been thrown up since the deluge, they must be formed of strata deposited in the plains, from which they have been elevated at the time of the deluge; and consequently, we have the same reason to expect shells immersed in these, as in the coverings of the other mountains, and we find them.

What

What farther confirms my opinion is, that wherever a mountain of this structure has been rent by any of the great accidents of nature, we see its inmost strata containing these fossil things, as well as the other; whereas, on the contrary, in the other they are found only on the surface to a certain depth, never in the central parts, where they are disclosed. It is a system worth establishing or worth refuting. I shall rest it wholly upon the answer to one question, which I beg you to ask of our noble and ingenious friend, whom I have mentioned once already. I suspect that the fossil shells of Cornwall will be found all in the upper strata. What the miners call the fast, is undoubtedly the same with what I in these mountains distinguish by the name is the original strata; and I am so sanguine as to be persuaded, no remain of any extraneous kind is found in that part of the strata; if this prove to be the case, I am certainly right. All the fossil shells, and parts of plants and animals we meet with, are of Diluvian origin, and all the surface of the earth, the beds and quarries in which they are found, are composed of the sediment of that flood. If it be otherwise; if these foreign bodies should be found in the fast in Cornwall, or in the bowels of mountains in Italy, there is an end of my system, and let who pleases account for the manner in which they came there: I am silent.

The END of the FIRST VOLUME.

W. per

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A circular stamp from the British Museum. The outer ring contains the words "BRITISH" at the top and "MUSEUM" at the bottom, separated by small dots. In the center of the circle is the date "23 JU 74".



